

**INDELIBLE**

**PAUL**



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# INDELIBLE



# INDELIBLE

A Story of  
Life, Love, and Music  
In Five Movements

BY

ELLIOT H. PAUL



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*The smile of the night and the day entwined.  
Harmony, the august marriage of love and hate.  
I will sing the God of the two mighty wings.  
Hosanna to Life! Hosanna to Death!*

**JEAN-CHRISTOPHE**





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# INDELIBLE

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## PART I: SAMUEL





# INDELIBLE

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## PART I: SAMUEL

### GOD'S ERASERS

*God looks o'er the world, a stupid, cluttered map with many billion eyes for dots, upstaring helter-skelter. The eyes are always bright to start with. Every morning the new ones are bright. Stillbirths don't count.*

*God has a roll-top desk, and in the pigeonholes, erasers.*

*First he tries a brown one, Heritage. He rubs the helter-skelter map and weaker dots fade out.*

*Brush away the débris.*

*A soiled eraser, Poverty, sweeps the sheet. Some are called and many weaken.*

*Flick the dirt away.*

*Down comes Crime, the red one, and eyes are smudged that were not aimed at. Eruption, Famine,*

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*Disease ; Storm, Pestilence, Drought. He tries them  
all at times.*

*Divine Impatience ! A steel eraser, War, which  
gashes the map and wipes great dead-white furrows.*

*A rotten job to clean this time.*

*Believe it or not, there are still bright eyes remain-  
ing.*

*Bang goes the lid of the roll-top desk.*

*Let them live !*

## MISS STODDARD, A TREE, AND OTHERS

MISS STODDARD lives in a little house across the street and her head wiggles a bit, especially when she thinks. She is "queer," and has no husband.

The little house has dark green edges, a low picket fence, and several kinds of trees. Behind it is a garden that does not amount to much. On the side of the sunset are three sad trees. They look tired, although they have nothing to do. I think they must be just tired of living. People who have nothing to do seem to feel this way, also, and many people in Cliftdale do not do much of anything. The sad tree-trunks are twisted like rheumatism. There are many thousand slim leaves with one bright side, and the sunlight fizzes through them like water from the garden hose when father screws the nozzle up tight. The twigs are not stiff as other twigs, but are yellow-green and droop like ladies' long hair being washed.

In front of Miss Stoddard's house is a sassafras tree, but it is really very beautiful. Who names trees? The sassafras tree is not sad, but stands straight and does not bend easily. The leaves turn

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red and yellow long before it is time for them to drop. On the other side of the house are pear trees with little hard sick-green things hanging down which are not quite good to eat, but the boys eat them. Miss Stoddard must know they are not good to eat because she does not chase the boys away.

The tree the birds like best is the cherry tree. It is always full of birds who talk all at once. Birds can talk and sing, but they sing much more than they talk. It sounds better and does them more good. Miss Stoddard lets the boys have all the cherries they can eat if they do not chase the birds out of her trees. The boys like her and are careful not to step on her ferns and petunias. Petunias, like sassafras, are much prettier than their names.

Flowers in the Stoddard yard are mixed with ferns and look happier than flowers in squares and oblongs.

Old Mrs. Stoddard hates boys and her head wiggles all the time, although she is too old to think a great deal. She calls Miss Stoddard "Mary" and is always worried about her because she is "queer." The old lady is a Baptist.

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ONE of the most exciting things I ever saw in Cliftondale happened on account of a tree and Miss Stoddard and others. I do not call her Mary because children should not be disrespectful until they are old enough. The tree I am talking about is the biggest in town and grows on the edge of the sidewalk between our house and Mr. and Mrs. Holt's. It grows woolly things, soft like caterpillars, which smell the same as the stuff mother puts on her hands when she burns them. Mother is always and forever burning her hands because she is "nervous."

"Nervous" is something like "queer," only it is in our own family, but mother's head does not wiggle. Only her chin shakes sometimes when I am troublesome. On rainy afternoons and when I am all over the measles, but the Board of Health has not taken down the red card, I am very troublesome.

The woolly caterpillar things drop off the big tree and cover the roof and sidewalk and a part of our yard. They use these things for bandages in Civil Wars. Mother says so, but I do not see how.

One day two men, whose blue pants came up like bibs in front and who spit brown all over the

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place, came down from the Street Department with a big saw and some ropes. Everybody went to the front windows, but Miss Stoddard ran across the street with her head shaking and talked to the men very rapidly. One of the men asked her, "What's eatin' yer?" — and that made her still more angry. I never heard a woman talk alone before, but she said as much as three or four together usually do. She said that if the Street Department wanted something to do, there were plenty of mudholes in Salem Street that needed filling in.

Father went out and said that the "damned old tree plugs up the gutters on the roof and wets the ceilings." Miss Stoddard was so mad that she talked a while to him without stopping. She said they could n't cut down the tree without a "hearing," and the men looked at each other and spit and waited. The policeman came and took a dirty brown thing from one of the men's pockets and then he spit brown, and father said, "We'll see about this"; and they all started down the street together. Miss Stoddard was so mad she did not even wear a hat. Mother stayed at home, but she was upset.



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When father came back, he was troublesome all the rest of the day, and mother's chin trembled and she cried because she had never heard him swear so before. Mother does not like to have us keep things from her. Miss Stoddard and father did not walk back together.

Such things do not often happen in Cliftondale. It is a pity.

A FEW days later, the men with blue pants that come up over their chests came back bringing a long thing with steps to walk up on trees and roofs with. The men sawed off two big branches of the woolly tree.

I was careful not to get under them when they spit. It made such an awful mess.

Now the big tree does not block the gutters, but there is a lot of it left.

This is a much better arrangement.

## DIFFERENT KINDS OF CHRISTIANS

“THERE goes poor old Marm Stoddard off to meetin’ alone,” says mother.

The Baptist Church is in the next town. Old Mrs. Stoddard’s clothes are black, and she ties her hat tight around her head with black ribbons. Not a bad idea. She carries an umbrella whether it rains or not, and pumps it up and down to stop cars and read the signs on them. Sometimes she gets on the cars.

“Mary is a selfish, wicked girl to let her poor mother go to church alone week after week. There she is now, diggin’ in that garden.”

Miss Stoddard wears a big calico hat in the garden, but she does not tie the strings. Her gloves are large and they flop. I cannot understand why mother calls her a girl, but I suppose it is because she has no husband.

“What a sight for a Christian neighborhood. — Come away from that window, Samuel. — It seems to me the police ought to stop such goings-on. Workin’ right there in plain sight on the Sabbath.”

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"Why should the police take Miss Stoddard if she digs?" I ask.

"Do you know what day this is? Thou shalt not work, thou shalt not play on this the Holy Sabbath day," says mother like a recitation.

"Why not?"

"Because the Lord God rested on the seventh day. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work. Don't you remember that in Sunday School?" Mother talks like the Bible after she is dressed up on Sunday morning or when there is a funeral.

"I thought Sunday was the first day of the week."

Chuckles in pipe smoke. Mother turns quick to father.

"Now, you need n't laugh, Alec. It's hard enough to bring up a boy without your encouragin' his impudence." Mother's face looks stiff as if she smelled elderberry wine. "You go get your collar on for church. We never get there until the minister is started on the sermon."

Father knocks the ashes from his pipe into a saucer and sighs. He grunts. Father always grunts just before doing something mother tells him. I do not think father would go to church if

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mother was not so set on it. Father looks better without a collar. His neck is brown and sweats when he is dressed up. Mother always closes the door when father puts on his collar and comes out saying something about a bad example to his son. That is me, but I do not wear such collars. Father wears a small black necktie with a hook on it. It slants, and he always tucks more flaps under one side of his collar than the other. His Sunday shirt is stiff and white, with rust marks from the hot iron. No one could work on Sunday if they were dressed like my father. Still, such clothes are not restful.

There are no Alecs in the Bible.

Last Sunday, mother was so mad she pinched my arm and would not give me pudding for dinner. It was all very simple.

I wished I were a Catholic because they go to church early in the morning and get it over with.

Catholics make mother madder than anything else. They go "traipsin' " by the house all morning, and if they have five dollars to give to a priest, they can sin all they want to. Mother says so.

I could never get five dollars, anyway.

I am not allowed to play with Catholic boys, but mother does not know them all. They call a priest

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"Father," and take off their hats when they go by the Catholic Church. The priest is very kind. I like him because once when I fell and hurt myself he picked me up and gave me an apple. Mother came running and jerked my arm all the way into the house, and said that if I ever went near that "Idolater" again, she would thrash me good.

I asked her what an Idolater is and she said a Papist. That also puzzles me, but asking questions gets me nowhere.

The Sunday-School lesson to-day is about a good Samaritan.

MR. AND MRS. HOLT are Episcopalians and live next door. I have listened outside their church. Episcopalians read out of a prayer book and have a rector. The rector reads and then the Episcopalians read after him, but he can read faster than the Episcopalians. They do not read in Gibberish like the Catholics do. It is all right to play with them.

Then there are Methodists, which must be something like Congregationalists, because when a Methodist gets mad with her pastor, she comes to our church, and vice versa.

I asked father what church Jesus went to, and

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he told me I better ask my mother. Then I did so and she said, "There were no churches in those days, so the people gathered on the beach to hear Jesus."

That seems to me a much better arrangement.

Miss Stoddard is an Atheist, mother says. That makes mother madder than anything except a Catholic because Atheists do not go to church at all and they work in gardens on the Lord's Day.

The Catholic Church is the only one which is anywhere near full on Sunday. Lots of people go in and out, mostly Irish and Micks, but I never dared look through the door, because either God would strike me dead or mother would find it out.



## PLAYING BIBLE

THERE is a Samuel in the Bible and that has caused me no end of trouble.

One Sunday our Sunday-School lesson was about Samuel and every time the teacher said it, all the boys and girls looked at me and laughed. This seems very silly to me.

A man named Elkaner had two wives, one named Hannah and the other named Banana. Hannah had no children and was much upset, although her husband told her not to worry because Banana had plenty. But Hannah wanted a son, and she told the Lord that if she had a son he should serve the Lord all the days of his life and never have his hair cut.

This seemed to be a good arrangement, so Hannah had a son and she named him "Samuel," which makes no end of trouble for me.

Samuel was a good boy and went to live with a judge named Eli. Judge Murphy's name is Mike, which makes mother mad as can be.

Samuel heard a voice in the night calling him and thought it was Eli, but soon found he was mistaken. After Samuel came to Eli's room several

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times, Eli told him to say, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth"; and not to wake him up again. The voice called "Samuel" again, and the boy in the Bible said what Eli told him to. Then the Lord told Samuel about a lot of hard luck which was coming to Eli because Eli's sons stole meat which belonged to the Lord. In the morning, Eli asked Samuel what had happened and Samuel gave the whole thing away. It turned out to be true and Samuel was made judge of Israel, one of the most prominent towns in the Bible.

EVER since that lesson, the boys who do not have to go to bed as early as I do, get under my window and holler, "Samuel, Samuel."

Mother blames me for the whole business.

I AM going to get even. Peter Brooks is one of the boys that yell at me and I found a lesson in the back of the Sunday-School book which will make him laugh on the other side of his face.

I am going to ask the boys to play Bible. Then I will make-believe I am a Roman soldier and take my wooden sword and wallop Peter in the ear and see how he likes to play Bible.

## CLIFTONDALE

FRED ELDRIDGE is a man with black whiskers whose wife cannot keep a hired girl more than a month because Fred will not let her alone. He talks very loud and is always laughing about something. None of the women who come to see mother like him, but they talk about him a lot. He lives in a fine house, but Mrs. Holt says that he does it on his wife's money. His wife is fat and is always fanning herself.

Mr. Eldridge, who everybody calls Fred without disrespect, is a selectman and makes speeches on occasions. An occasion is when people gather in the town hall or any place excepting church. Fred is political boss of Cliftondale, but I cannot see for the life of me what good that does him. I can recall two speeches he has made. One was about having two sessions of school, morning and afternoon, instead of a long session in the morning. He was very witty, and said that the mothers should be considered first and should not have the children at home all the afternoon. Fred and his wife have five children. The other speech was thrilling.

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It was about the grave danger Cliftondale was in if a conflagration started. Also there were a few words about a fire station.

Fred likes to make speeches on occasions. Father likes him, but mother does not.

This is also true of Bill Milliken, who has broken his poor wife's heart. I do not understand this, because Bill's wife is bigger than he is and talks without ceasing. Almost every time I pass their house, she is talking loudly and unkindly to Bill, who seems afraid of her.

Mother says every time Bill gets a nickel, he goes to Chelsea and spends it for rum. When Bill comes back from Chelsea, he is happy, but finds it hard to walk straight. He smells like the keg of elderberry wine father keeps in the barn on account of sickness. Mother says Bill is a drunkard, and if she was his wife she would give him poison. Father says that if Sarah Milliken was his wife, he would take poison.

Father and Fred and Bill Milliken sometimes play cards in the barn and have all been sick at the same time, for I have seen them drink elderberry wine once or twice. Of course, I do not say anything to mother about this, for wickedness stirs her

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up dreadfully. I have heard her say that cards are instruments of Satan. That puzzles me, because Doc Gregg, a deacon in our church, who looks pious, has lots of cards for sale in his drugstore.

THERE seems to be some hard feeling between men and their wives.

FATHER does not have a job like other men in the neighborhood. He takes things too easy, so mother says.

He gets up early in the morning and drives to a railroad station to get newspapers in big bundles which he takes to several places before other people are awake. I go with him sometimes and I know where each bundle should be left.

Things are very quiet and damp, early in the morning, all except the birds, which do most of their talking at that time. The air tingles and I shiver even when it is not cold. The sunset is backwards in the morning and the colors look cleaner. Flowers are folded up. Getting up so early gives me an appetite something like a belly-ache. I wonder why newspaper bundles come so early. I should like to carry newspapers around to people's

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houses, but mother says it would make me tough. There are worse things than being tough, father said.

Cats and dogs are sociable in the morning, and I can warm my hands on Daisy's neck.

IN the daytime, father has a carpet-cleaning shop in Melrose, but mother says he dawdles half the day. I do not see when he gets time to dawdle. I do not like the carpet-cleaning shop because the water around the yard smells bad and is rusty-colored. Inside, the shop is full of dust which chokes my throat. When father puts down carpets, I go with him to many strange houses and hold the tacks. Sometimes he lets me hammer the tacks.

Daisy moves slowly because she is so fat, and she likes father so well that she follows him around and talks to him when he comes back. Mother says father makes more fuss over that old nag than he does about her. He cleans out her stall carefully and spends half the summer getting hay for her. All the boys like father, especially when he is getting hay, because he always gives them a ride and lets them pack the hay into the barn.

On Sunday mornings, father is quiet as can be

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when he goes for the newspaper bundles because he does not want to make mother cross about his working on the Sabbath. What harm does it do, when there is nobody else awake to know about it? I have to keep the funny papers out in the barn. They only come on Sunday and no Sunday paper shall ever cross our threshold.

WOMEN are Christians very thoroughly, all except Miss Stoddard.

I HAVE thought it over a great deal, and when I grow up I shall be an Atheist so I can do as I please on Sunday.



## THE SPARK

BILL MILLIKEN has taught me to play a zither.

One day I was passing his home when his wife was away and the sounds inside made me tingle all over. It was like brownies frolicking in Jack Frost's ice palace. I looked in and Bill let me come and watch him.

Sinners are always easy to get along with.

The strings on the left-hand side of a zither have one thick brown one and three thin ones in a bunch, to make "chords." Chords are different sounds which get along well together. They are the best part of music, because tunes do not amount to much without them. The strings the tunes come from are on the right, and the higher the note, the shorter the string. "Do" and "Re" have a string in between which is not in the scale we sing in school.

I do not like music in school because the girls and boys are always out of tune and my voice squeaks so that I do not dare to sing out loud.

Bill asked me if I could play, and I never will forget how I shivered when I touched the big brown



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string on the bottom and it sang like a jolly bull-frog. It made me want to laugh and cry at the same time if such a thing is possible. I rubbed my thumb over the three little strings and got a chord. I have heard the chord before. It is "do-me-sol," and I knew it was right. Then I tried to find the tune on the right hand. The name of the tune is "Beautiful Sunset." Now I can play it just like Bill does, and I hear it singing in my ears all the time, zither or no zither.

Why don't people play and sing more, especially husbands and wives? In church, they sing out of tune, but it sounds good once in a great while.

I can play three different chords on the zither and there must be many more. Music makes me feel like rainbows and birds and melting icicles. Bill has an old zither which he is stringing up for me. When he gets it done, he said he will give it to me so I can play at home.

What a pity he cannot let strong drink alone!

The strings of the zither wail and frighten me when Bill tightens them. Peter Brooks has a harmonica, but a zither is much better. When you blow a harmonica in and out, it sounds like a little donkey.

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Where do sounds come from? I hear them everywhere now. The frogs and crickets sing. The wind makes sad noises and the water in the brook makes happy ones. In the night, the noises are lonesome, but sometimes I like night noises better.

I AM going to be a musician as well as an Atheist.

## THE FLICKER

SCHOOL has opened again, and I am glad because I am going to take piano lessons. The boys will laugh at me, but I do not care. It happened this way.

There is a song we sing in school which sounds well in places, but I used to dread it because it ended wrong. The composer is Mozart and Burns wrote the words. Every time we came to the end, it made me squirm and stuff up my ears. Miss Hayden, the teacher, saw me making faces one day and did n't like it at all.

"Samuel," she said, "what are you making faces about?"

I always blush when the teacher speaks to me in school and I cannot say a word because everybody looks at me and snickers.

"Come here," she said, very cross. I stumbled on the way up and the class laughed. That made Miss Hayden red and she slapped her pointer down on the desk. I was scared.

"What did you make faces about?" she said, holding my face tight so I could not turn away.

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"I have to when we sing 'Would be my queen,'" I said, feeling foolish.

"We will see if you cannot keep your face straight," said Miss Hayden. "Now, children, we will sing that song again."

The song has alto and soprano which go together all right until the last line, which is, "The brightest jewel in my crown, would be my queen, would be *my queen*," but the last "*queen*" is not right. I felt it coming, although I bit my lips hard and said the Lord's prayer to myself to keep from hearing, but my face puckered on that last "*queen*."

Whack went the pointer on my legs until my eyes stung.

"Once again, children," — madder than ever.

I kept my fists tight and tried to think about something else, but my face twisted just before the end, and this time, just as she started to whack my legs with the pointer, Mr. Chase, the music supervisor, came in.

"What is the matter?" he said to Miss Hayden.

I was so mad I cried right out loud and said to him, "The end of that song is not right and I can't help making faces."

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The class all tittered, and that made me want to kill them all, and Miss Hayden, too.

"What do you mean?" asked Mr. Chase, looking at the music. "What song does he refer to?" he asked of Miss Hayden, who seemed sorry he came. She pointed it out.

"Let us hear it again," Mr. Chase said.

I got ready to kick her in the shins if she whacked me. When they sang the second "*queen*," Mr. Chase made a face, too, and looked closely at the book.

"There is a misprint," he said. "That 'E' should be natural instead of flat. We must take up those books and correct them."

I never saw Miss Hayden so mad. God pity her husband.

Mr. Chase took me with him to the principal's office and talked very kindly.

"What is your name?" he said.

"Samuel Graydon."

"Do you study music outside of school?"

"I can play a zither," I said, feeling comfortable. Mr. Chase is not like other teachers.

"How did you know that note was wrong?" he asked.

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"I could n't help making faces when I heard it."

"Well, well, well," he chuckled. "Will you show me where you live?"

Then Mr. Chase went home with me, right in the middle of school, and stopped on the way to buy some candy, which he gave me. He said, "Well, well, well," several times and rubbed his hands as if he enjoyed the whole business. Mother looked worried when we came in, for I am a dunce in school and she thought I was being expelled.

Mr. Chase said, "How do you do, Mrs. Graydon? I am the music supervisor."

Mother said very little, but fumbled her dress.

"Samuel has a gift for music. I think it would be fine if he could have piano lessons."

Mother was so surprised she almost choked. She thinks music will keep me from being tough, but I do not see what difference it makes. Mr. Chase told her the whole story, and said I had been punished unjustly, and made her quite happy. She said surely I must have piano lessons if he thought it advisable.

Then he asked me to play the zither, and I played "Beautiful Sunset" better than usual.

"Who taught you that?" he inquired, and I told

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him about Bill Milliken, and he rubbed his hands and said, "Well, well, well." Then he showed me how to play the same chords on the piano that I play on the zither, and you have no idea how wonderful it was. Then he said, "Let us try it together. You play it on the zither." I started it again, and he played soft chords on the piano and little ripples that made a lump come in my throat.

"You keep perfect time," he said. "You will make a fine player, Samuel. Let me see your hands."

I rubbed them on my pants to get them clean and then showed them to him.

"Very good," he said. Then he talked some more to my mother, who did not know what to make of the whole business.

"Who would you recommend for a teacher?" she inquired.

"Mr. Flynn is very good."

Mother turned red, and I knew she did n't like it, because Mr. Flynn is Irish and Catholic. Mr. Chase went.

The same evening, mother had a talk with father, who did n't see any sense in it, but said "All right"

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after a few words by mother. I am going to take lessons beginning next week, but not from Mr. Flynn, because mother guessed we could stick to our own kind. I am going to take from Miss Clafin, who plays in our church. I am sorry she is going to be my music teacher because she does not always hit the right notes herself.

That seems more important to me than Catholics and Protestants.



## TRIALS

MUSIC lessons have certain drawbacks because the boys make fun of me. The only other boy in the neighborhood who takes music lessons is a Catholic whose name is Jack Foley. Jack plays the violin and practices two hours every day. Sometimes I hang around his house and listen. The low tones have a feeling like a great glad cat purring, but the higher you go on a violin, the more it is likely to squeak.

Waiting for a squeak is worse than hearing it sooner or later.

Jack is in my room in school and I talk with him about music when we are in the schoolyard. I wish he was not a Catholic and a Mick, because I like him. Mother will not let me invite him to our house for that reason.

Many girls take music lessons, mostly piano, but I do not believe a girl can play a piano as hard as is sometimes necessary. One night there was a concert in our church which cost a quarter. I got a ticket for nothing because I sold ten tickets. I am very much ashamed when I ask people to buy

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tickets, and I will not do it when the church has bean suppers, but a concert is different.

I will never forget that concert. A tall man with a chin way down on his neck sang what is called a bass solo which made gooseflesh all over me. The name of the song was "King of the Forest Am I," and while the tall man was resting between verses, another man who was playing the piano struck some chords way down in the grumbling strings harder than a woman could do it. Every time I think of those chords I can see lions fighting and I cried at the concert when it happened.

Father said, "What in hell ails the boy?" and mother's face became righteously indignant and said, "Hush, Alec," mad as could be. It seems as if father uses the name of the Lord in vain when he is dressed up in a white shirt and collar and a black tie with a hook on it.

One girl in Cliftdale, whose name is Hazel, plays the cornet. She plays wonderfully, and I don't see how a girl can get such a strong clean noise by just blowing a cornet. She played "The Palms" at a concert. I love to hear her play, but I do not look at her while she is playing, because sometimes, when the notes are especially high, her

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eyes get crossed, and I am so afraid the cornet will slip that I hold my breath all through the piece.

The boys make fun of me because I play the piano, which they think is for girls. The girls make fun of Hazel because she plays the cornet which they think is for boys.

A hard lot falls to a musician.

Violins seem to be all right for both boys and girls. The boys in our neighborhood do not make fun of Jack Foley because, although they are Protestants, he is not afraid of anybody.

Fighting seems silly to me, and I am not sure who I can lick because I am so good-natured.

PETER BROOKS called me Little Lord Fauntleroy one day when I was going to take my music lesson. I did not know what he meant, but I did not like the sound of it from the first.

Miss Stoddard has more books than anybody in Clifondale. I have even seen her reading the Bible, which does n't seem right for a person of her habits. She reads stories to me on Sunday afternoons. Mother does not like it, because Miss Stoddard is an Atheist, but she lets me go to keep me quiet. Last Sunday, Miss Stoddard read me about

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Little Lord Fauntleroy and it made me good and mad. If Peter Brooks had been there I would have punched him in the eye for calling me that. Lord Fauntleroy was a sissie who wore velvet pants, even on week days. Just because I take music lessons, I do not have to be called names like that. When she had finished reading, she asked me how I liked it, and I said I liked the Russian stories much better. She smiled and her head wiggled and she said there is some hope for me.

A person can be honest with Miss Stoddard. She is so contrary that she likes it.

The Russian fairy stories are nicer than anything except music. There are moujiks with pointed black beards like the right-hand one on cough-drops boxes. The moujiks have big fireplaces which crackle and they sleep on the stove. What a climate they must have! Russians are always and forever going on sleigh-rides. The horses are spirited, much more so than Daisy, and they have hoops on their necks with lots of bells. The stories sound as if there are big drifts of snow in Russia, white and smooth and deep. The snow in Clifftondale is sloppy and wet and gets dirty in no time.

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I asked mother about Russian snow and she told me not to bother my head about such foreign nonsense. The U.S.A. is good enough for us, she said. If Russia was any good, the dirty Jews would stay there. Mother hates Jews, although they are spoken very highly of in the Bible.

I asked mother if Jesus was a Jew, and she said, "No, Jesus was the Son of God."

"Where did Joseph come in?" I said, and father choked.

Mother said, "That boy will be the death of me."

I GUESS the only place to find out about religion is in church, but they talk so queer in church and Sunday School, which is attached, that it is beyond my comprehension. For a long time, I did not ask Miss Stoddard on account of her having no religion, but one day I was thinking and she asked me what I was thinking about. Then I asked whether Jesus was the Son of God or if Joseph was his father.

"What difference does it make who his father was? He was a great, good man who tried hard to show us how to live."

That is the most sensible thing I ever heard about Jesus, but it does n't sound a bit religious.

## THANKSGIVING

MOTHER has a crippled hand now, the right one, and I am so sorry for her that I stay in the house and help her with the work, and I only practice a half an hour at a time, it gets on her nerves so.

Thanksgiving morning, she was cutting a squash and knocked a little skin off of her thumb. I do not see how such a little thing could make so much trouble, but it blood-poisoned her.

A few days afterward, mother was sick in bed and she called Dr. Lawrence, who asked her a lot of things and took her temperature, which caused him to say "HMMMM." That did n't do any good. Just as he was leaving, mother said, "I have a little cut on my thumb which has swelled considerable." He did n't see it before, because it was under the bedclothes, and mother did n't think anything of it.

I wish you could have seen his face. From then on things happened thick and fast. He sent me across the street for Miss Stoddard, who knows all about sickness, although she never had children of her own. A bed was moved downstairs. I hung

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around in the next room and mother screamed so I stuffed up my ears and bit my lips till they bled. The doctor said something about its being better now that it was lanced, and Miss Stoddard came out with a wash-basin full of blood, and then father came home and the doctor talked low to him quite a while. The doctor then left, saying he would return later.

Things went from bad to worse. Mother did not get better, and I do not see how she could, minus a whole wash-basin full of blood. The doctor came twice a day and mother screamed every time he came.

I wish they would let me into the room, because if I can see a thing, it is not so dreadful.

In the meantime, our coal gave out and we could not get any on account of a coal strike for which some foreign agitators ought to be hung. Nobody could get coal and we had a terrific freezing spell. I do not know how many people said they would like to see the militia called out and the strikers shot down like dogs.

Father looked as sick as mother. He would n't say a word, he was so dependent on her, but just sat around rubbing his fingers, and every five



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minutes he would go in and look at her and come out more dependent than ever. At last I sneaked in with him.

I shall never forget it.

Mother's eyes were staring wide open and she was talking to herself. Miss Stoddard was holding her arm tight. It was wrapped in cotton batting. Mother did not seem to know father and I, although she looked right at us.

The doorbell rang and I almost fainted. Father broke down, and Miss Stoddard said, "For Heaven's sake, get out, Alec."

Dr. Lawrence came in and had Dr. Maginnis with him. Dr. Maginnis is just like a bear. He wore a big fur coat and gloves and his voice is deeper than the man who sang "King of the Forest Am I." Dr. Maginnis went to the dining-room table, took an apple, and started to eat it.

"Where is the patient?" he asked, so loud I almost fell over. He meant my mother.

A patient is somebody who owes a doctor's bill.

The doctors went in and I waited outside the door, knowing something was going to happen. Dr. Maginnis "Hmmm'd" an octave lower than Dr. Lawrence, and said to Miss Stoddard, "When



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did you get any sleep last?" but Miss Stoddard did n't say anything, because the doctor is supposed to ask his questions to the patient.

Terrible noises came through the door.

"Let me see!" — bass. "HmMMM" — falsetto.  
"HmMMM" — basso.

Mother screamed and screamed, and father said, "For God's sake, be careful, doc," and Dr. Maginnis said, "You go to Malden as fast as you can, Alec, and get me a small package of absorbent cotton." Father hurried out, and when he was gone, Dr. Maginnis said, "Now maybe we can do something, doctor."

Doctors call each other doctor.

Mother shrieked again, and I knew Dr. Maginnis was doing something, but somehow I felt he knew what he was about better than anybody except Miss Stoddard. Then I heard his voice and things began to swim around me. I never sweat so in cold weather. He said, "There's a slim chance we won't have to take off that arm. Her other hand is swollen." That paralyzed me like a snake.

They sent for Mrs. Holt and I waited close to the door. Then I smelled a sharp biting smell which made me sick to my stomach, almost. I heard things

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dropping into wash-basins and water dripping and Dr. Maginnis grunting. It seemed hours, and at last I had to open the door and take a look.

It is a good thing I did. They were crowded around mother, who had something over her nose, and just then the lamp swayed and Dr. Maginnis caught it and Mrs. Holt fell down hard on the floor. Dr. Maginnis swore something awful and rolled her away with his foot, and said, "Is n't there somebody to hold the lamp! We can't stop now."

The first thing I knew, my legs were walking over, and I had the lamp, and all I remember is blood and knives and wash-basins and Dr. Maginnis grunting and Miss Stoddard holding mother's arm. Dr. Lawrence was holding that smelling thing on mother's face. The smell confused my memory.

My arms went to sleep holding the lamp, and I just looked at the wall-paper and bit my tongue and kept my balance, although I was swaying all the time. After a long while, when I was all numb, everybody straightened up and the lamp started to tip, and Miss Stoddard caught it. Dr. Maginnis said, "Lord! I forgot all about that kid!" He car-

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ried me to the next room and put me on the couch and said, "Son, we will make a doctor out of you."

"Not if I know it, you won't make no doctor out of me," I said. I was so tired I could hardly keep from laughing. Just then there was a commotion at the front door and father came running in with the absorbent cotton.

Dr. Maginnis hurried away to another case. When a doctor gets a job, he calls it a case.

While I was asleep, Fred Eldridge had the coal in his cellar moved to our cellar, so the house was warm when I woke up.

Somehow, the story reached Peter Brooks, and the boys had more respect for me for quite a while.

Thanksgiving gives me a pain in the neck,

## MALE AND FEMALE

BEING in love interferes with me from A to Z.

It started at a party, where all the boys and girls are supposed to have a good time. The party was a surprise party on Peter Brooks and he was not to know anything about it. I asked him over to my house for the evening and all the Protestants who were invited went into Mrs. Brooks's parlor and turned down the lights. Then Mrs. Brooks came over and said she wanted Peter to come right home, but asked me to go, too. Of course, I knew what was in the wind, and so did Peter, but Peter was a good sport and did n't let on.

A secret is common knowledge in Cliftdale.

Peter's mother likes to please him and he is fond of his mother. When we went to Peter's house, they turned on the lights and the party was in full swing.

Hazel Knot, the girl who plays the cornet so fluently, was there and it seemed all right to have some music, which is customary at parties. So they asked her if she brought her cornet, although any darn fool could see it up on top of the piano.

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This is called etiquette.

She took it out of the box and tried it to see if it would blow all right. Then she took out her music and smiled at me and asked me if I would play her accompaniment. This made Ethel Goodman mad as a March hare, and it was so intended, for Ethel had made remarks about Hazel.

I had never played an accompaniment for a cornet, but I knew I could do it, and was n't I glad when I saw the music! It was "Selections from Faust," very much like a similar piece for piano which I have, except it was in the key of B flat. It starts with a crash and some chords, and I said to myself, "Now I will show these girls something." Hazel put the cornet in front of her face and nodded professionally, and I wish you could have heard that first note. We hit it right on the dot, and then I made the bass go "Boom-b-Boom," and squared my shoulders like the pianist did at the church concert. The Soldiers' Chorus part went along just like marching, and then came a part called "Flower Song," in waltz time, which is not in my piece from "Faust." I had sense enough to know it was different from the loud part, so I played it light as a feather. I was right with Hazel on the retards and

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even looked at the ceiling once or twice for effect. Hazel keeps perfect time. When the finale came, loud and staccato, I nearly jarred the cornet box off the piano and brought out the last note like the crack of a whip.

When we finished, we were so excited that Hazel came right over and put her hand on my shoulder and said, "I never had a professional who could stay with me as well as that"; and the boys and girls clapped and clapped. I don't know what made me think of it, but I wished Bill Milliken had been there. He would have enjoyed it so much.

For an encore, Hazel played a Song without Words which rocked gently like a boat. I would like to see the man who can get words on a cornet.

Then came the games. We played Post Office, a kissing game, which made me nervous because I had never kissed a girl. We all had numbers, and the first time Hazel went out, she called my number. We were both still excited from the music, and if it had been any one else, I would n't have kissed them, but Hazel put her arms around my neck, and for a minute I felt like a part of that "Flower Song." My pulse beat in waltz time.

When the party was over, I heard Peter ask

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Hazel if he might go home with her, but she said she was sorry, I had already asked her. I never was sad and glad so close together. The only reason I had n't asked her was because I am not used to society and did n't know just how to go about it. Hazel has presence of mind as well as talent. I walked home with her and we took a long time about it, late as it was. When I try to talk, I have difficulty.

I kissed her good-night, enjoying it even more, out in the open air.

Ever since, I have been so happy I could not practice more than a half an hour at a time, until yesterday afternoon, when Hazel went skating with Peter. Since then I have not practiced at all.

## THE TRUTH, FOR ONCE

A NEW minister has come and gone and Mrs. Brooks turned Atheist and continues to be. Here is the story in a nutshell.

Reverend J. Torrence Williamson was called to another church because the standing committee thought we needed a change. After trying several candidates, Mr. Howard Talbot, D.D., a young and amiable man, was called to our church and the deacons voted to hire him.

I liked him immensely because he talked sense and was good to everybody, even including Catholics and Irish. The women and deacons, however, never heard of such a thing. One of his first sermons was so good that I listened all the way through. Mr. Talbot said our forefathers came to America to worship God in their own way and that every church and creed was good for something and we should be tolerant to fellow Christians no matter what church they attend. We should be broad-minded with respect to those who do not think as we do, because maybe they are right, who knows?

He laughed when he said that, but most of the



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women and deacons smelled a rat and looked very remonstrative. After church only a few of the audience seemed glad to see Mr. Talbot when he shook hands at the door and asked them to come again as usual.

People call each other brother and sister in church.

I shook hands with Mr. Talbot and said I enjoyed the sermon, which, for once, was the truth.

While we were eating dinner, I asked mother how she liked the sermon. She said the old-time gospel was the only way to salvation, and that idolaters should not be encouraged in their ways of darkness, and she never thought she would see the day when our church should degenerate like the Universalists. I asked about them, and she said all they went to church for was to keep up appearances. That is the reason I have to mow the lawn, and why father has to be quiet with the newspapers on Sunday mornings.

Tuesday the Social Circle met at our house to make quilts to be sold for missionaries to the heathen who wear no clothes in distant lands. I never heard such a meeting, except once before when

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Mrs. Taylor had a divorce because her husband ran away with a waitress in Boston and left her to shift for herself as best she could.

Two wrongs do not make a right.

It was agreed at the meeting that something should be done in various ways, but Mrs. Ford, a young and pretty lady who does n't have much to say ordinarily, said that she, for one, thought Mr. Talbot was just right and that it was time the members of our church realized it. Her remarks were like the seed that falleth on stony ground, and the fowls did eat and seemed to bring a note of discord into the meeting. They had it hot and heavy for some time, and Mrs. Tomlinson got so mad she went home without even waiting for mother to ask her to come again, which is etiquette.

Mr. Talbot has formed a baseball team in the Sunday School and went around himself to collect money for baseball suits. Fred Eldridge gave twenty dollars for the suits, although I have heard him say that he does n't care a rap for foreign missions. The boys all liked Mr. Talbot, but that did n't help matters. The congregation kept getting smaller and younger and Mr. Talbot looked worried.

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A congregation is like an audience, except that they come for duty instead of pleasure.

THE last straw was a game of tennis which was the talk of the town. The weather was fine, and who should go to the tennis court but Mr. Talbot in white pants and the young Catholic who is just being made a priest. They are both good players and it was nip and tuck. Almost every member of our church made calls that evening, and Mr. Talbot was called elsewhere to another church where such goings-on may or may not be tolerated for all Deacon Gregg cares.

I was so mad that I told Mr. Talbot he was lucky to get out of this town, which, for once, was the truth. Mr. Talbot's last sermon was a hot one about clearing out your own eye before thy neighbor's.

Now the minister's name is Reverend Ezekiel Babson, who could n't play beanbag, let alone tennis.

MRS. BROOKS left the church without a letter of recommendation because the women disapproved of her so emphatically behind her back.

Peter and I, and others in our room who were so

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fortunate, graduated from grammar school in June, and Mrs. Brooks set up a soda-water stand at Revere Beach in order to make money so that Peter could have a high-school education. It would have gone on without undue comment if she had not kept it open Sundays, which is the best time to make money at Revere Beach.

The members of the congregation, most of them, thought it better that the boy never should set his foot inside high school rather than to profit by such an arrangement. Mrs. Brooks told several of them they had better mind their own business and they did not take kindly to it, so she up and left the church and now she is an Atheist, making at least two in Cliftdale.

## AMBITION

By hook or crook, I am going to the Conservatory. That will be better than wasting time at high school where they use letters in their arithmetic and call it algebra.

For some time, I have been dissatisfied with Miss Clafin as a teacher, because I can play scales and pieces better than she can, and she wastes no end of time trying to make me use my thumb just as if it were like my other fingers, which, you can see, is impossible. I never think of such a thing except when I am taking a lesson.

She had a recital of all her pupils and a hundred people were there. She wanted me to play the "Ben Hur Chariot Race," which sounds to me like a motor-man with a milk team stuck on the track. She even printed it on the programme, but I kicked over the traces and played Chopin's Grande Valse de Concert in E flat, causing more applause than all the rest put together, including Miss Clafin herself, who played "Alice, Where Art Thou Going," in a manner which left considerable room for doubt.

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Take it all and all, my relations with Miss Clafin have been anything but pleasant lately, and I have helped mother so much since her hand was crippled that she could not very well refuse me. Of course I was really sorry for mother and anxious to help without any nigger in the woodpile.

Father does n't see what good the Conservatory of Music is, because I can play good enough for anybody within reason. My parents do not understand what music means and I am just beginning to myself. I explained to father the fact that by going to the Conservatory I will have much more time to help him at the carpet-cleaning shop, which I have no intention of doing at the present time.

However, it is settled to the satisfaction of all concerned except Miss Clafin, who may go to the dickens and welcome.

She says I am ungrateful to her, but I don't know what for.

## KILLING TIME

WHY are my teeth so homely? There are two longer than the rest and they stick out a little. The four front ones are too small and have saw-tooth edges. When I smile, I have to keep my lips tight together so my teeth will not show. That makes my face look twisted.

Miss Stoddard told mother that my teeth should be straightened by a dentist, but mother said we might as well wait until he is older and perhaps they will grow straight of their own accord. Mother does not believe in tinkering with boys, as the Good Lord does everything for a purpose.

If I only understood religion, I could find an excuse for doing all the things that ought not to be done, and vice versa.

My pants are becoming a problem. I ought to have had long ones sometime ago, but I am so clumsy and so much longer-legged than the other boys in my room that mother says I should not try to look as old as my father. That would be impossible, of course. My feet are bigger than is necessary, but I can put up with this, because if they

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were not, probably my hands would not be big, and I need big hands to play octaves.

Everybody says I look like father, and he is not the worst looking man in town when he is not dressed up for church or an occasion. Dressing in collars and ties does not come natural to a man of my father's type.

Collars and shirts are a thorn in my side. My neck is not very thick, but my arms are longer than shirt-sleeves, by several inches. Either my collar is so big for me the boys shoot spitballs inside, or my wrists show almost halfway up to my elbows.

Miss Stoddard had a long talk with me last Sunday afternoon about my future. Her head wiggled more than usual. She likes the idea of my going to the Conservatory next fall, but she does not like me to stop being educated. She made me promise to read several of her books, which she will select in proper order. I do not think reading to myself will be as much fun as having Miss Stoddard read to me.

The boys call Miss Stoddard an old maid, and make fun of me, saying that she is my girl. The only fight I ever had was because Frank Wilson said Miss Stoddard looked like a turkey. She can-



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not help her looks, and she has more sense than anybody in Clifftondale. I said I would make him look like a mushrat, and then we had a fight. I was afraid at first, although I am taller than Frank. I could n't seem to do much because my legs got mixed up and I am so slow-motioned, but I got such a bang in the nose that the next thing I knew, I had him licked. Then his big brother started to lick me, and Irving Watson, another big boy, pitched into him and told him to take some one his size. It seems as if there were fights all over Clifftondale that day.

Watching fights is contagious.

I AM tired most of the time, although I do as little as possible. I do not enjoy helping father get hay for Daisy because I ache most of the time, and working in the house makes me restless to get out. The worst of it is, I do not practice or play the piano much because when I sit still I am more discontented. Hazel is away for the summer and Peter works down at Revere Beach with his mother at the soda-water stand. I wish I could go to the beach on Sunday without lying about it. I do not like to go into the bath-house at Revere Beach and

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undress in front of so many strange boys. My ribs look funny.

Reading makes my head ache and the words get blurred after a short time. The first book Miss Stoddard gave me to read was about Rip Van Winkle, a funny name. It seems that Rip went into the mountains and found dwarfs rolling balls which made noise like thunder. Rip did n't think much of this, so he went to sleep for twenty years and did nothing but grow whiskers. When he woke up, the scenery was about the same, but the people were either dead or twenty years their senior. Another story was about William Tell who was a crack shot with a bow and arrow. The king bet William that he could n't shoot an apple off his son's head, and lost the bet, luckily for the boy, whom his father thought a great deal of. The king would have lost either way, because if William had hit the boy, he was going to hit the king with another arrow and see how *he* liked it.

GOING swimming is not much fun because it is such a long walk, and the water is dirty at high tide and at low tide you can't swim. Ever since I saw a dead cat in the swimming-hole, I have felt as if I smelled

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something all the time I was in swimming, and that spoils the fun. The greenies are all over the place and bite terribly. I don't know which is worse, to be bit by a horsefly, or to have somebody swat you and try to kill it.

It is about horse and horse.

I NEVER spent a summer that was so hard to kill time. I tried shooting squirrels with my air rifle, but there were no squirrels in the woods and the brown-tail moths had eaten all the leaves and gave me the itch to boot. Almost all the leaves in Clif-tondale have been eaten by the brown-tail moths, and now the State is painting a circle around the trees so the moths can't get down and eat the grass. The caterpillars come down on strings, and I don't see what good painting the trees will do. Miss Stoddard's trees are not eaten up, but she spends half her time spraying them with white-wash.

PRETTY soon the dog days will be here when the dogs have to wear muzzles and your shirt stays damp and sticky all night. I think dog days are nonsense because dogs are no crosser than people in

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such weather. Anyway, it gives the cop something to do, making people put muzzles on their dogs.

Mother has been tormenting me all this week about cutting the grass. I suppose I shall have to do it, but I have no desire to. Why can't they let the grass grow long in the yard and make hay out of it, instead of going all over Christendom for hay?

I WONDER if Hazel will be back from her vacation before Peter and his mother close up the soda-water stand at Revere Beach.

If so, I will have the coast clear.

MISS STODDARD has given me a book to read entitled "What a Boy Ought to Know," which caused a controversy between mother and her. The book explains about sex and similar matters. There are a lot of things about it that I do not understand. For instance, there is a part which says men and women have babies by contact which is pure and right and proper. I asked Miss Stoddard about that, and she said I would find out when I was old enough. That is the first time she ever pulled that on me, but I suppose, on account of not being married, she does not know.

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Being married is not all there is to it, because Mr. and Mrs. Ford and others have no children, and Deacon Gregg's hired girl had to be discharged because she had a baby without a husband, and she was not married at all.

The book tells several things about not hugging and kissing girls and keeping the mind and body clean so that when you are married you can look your wife in the face. Mother found the book and got real mad at Miss Stoddard for giving it to me.

"No modest woman could talk about such things," mother said.

Miss Stoddard is modest to a fault. She never had a fellow in her life; that is, since I have known her. Of course, Miss Stoddard is not pretty like Hazel.

What displeased mother, I think, was the fact that she told me previously that the doctor brought children, but what do I care about that? The Lord knows I don't want any children around.

Deacon Gregg moved away right after his hired girl had the baby without being married, and there was an argument in the church as to whether or not they should give his wife an individual letter of recommendation. Mother was discussing it with

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father, and he said, "You'd better give the Deacon a letter of recommendation." That made mother huffy, and she said when sin came into our midst, it should not be made light of.

THERE are so many sinners, it seems to me we should all make the best of it, and let it go at that.

ETHEL GOODMAN's mother and father went away the other night and she asked me to come over and see her. I thought I might as well, so long as Hazel was not in town and would not know it. Ethel is not homely, but she is quite thin and not bashful enough to suit me. She sat on the sofa and I sat in a rocking-chair and we had hard work finding something to talk about. I did not ask her to play the piano because she makes a mess of it.

After a while she asked me if I would not be more comfortable on the sofa, so we sat together and held hands, and it started to get dark, but she did not light the lamp. I put my arm around her and she liked it and got as close as she could, although it was hot weather and I perspired quite a little. When it was real dark we began kissing each other. We stayed there quite a while, and I hugged

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her as best I could, although I remembered afterwards what the book said about not doing it, so you could look your wife in the face.

She showed me the French kiss where you stick your tongue out, but I did n't like it. Ethel was restless as could be, and all of a sudden she burst out crying. She said nothing was the matter, and as soon as she quieted down, I went home, as it was late.

I do not like to have girls hug me after I am tired of hugging them. I wonder if all girls will let you kiss them. Hazel and Ethel are the only ones I can vouch for.

Most girls and women cry at the drop of the hat.

THERE is one thing I do not like about going to the Conservatory of Music. Hazel and Peter are both going to high school and that may be my Waterloo.

FRED ELDRIDGE has an automobile which goes without horses, but is always and forever getting stuck somewhere. When it gets stuck in Cliftondale, mother shuts down the windows so I will not hear Fred swear, but I knew all the words long ago, so she might as well save herself the trouble.



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Sin of all kinds is an eyesore to mother.

Fred's automobile scared the grocery team and they ran away, catching one wheel on a lamp-post and capsizing groceries all over the street. The cop stopped the horses after they ran into the post. It was a lively time and I got a package of sweet chocolate out of it.

I AM learning to smoke, but will know better next time than to start in on cigars. I got sick at first, but I have stuck to it and now am quite efficient.

Yesterday, father and I went to Saugus to pick elderberries so he can make a barrel of wine in case of sickness. I am on to him and his sickness. Father let me try some of last year's elderberry wine that was left in the bottom of the barrel, but it smelled like vinegar and turned my stomach. I do not think I shall enjoy drinking, if I attempt it. There are other forms of sin more attractive.

Mother says, "The Devil lurks behind the swinging door," meaning the door of a bar-room which I have seen going by on a street-car. I can always tell by mother's face when there is a bar-room in the vicinity of the street-car. There are no bar-rooms in Cliftdale on account of the people



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voting "No License" for thirty years. Just before election, some of the women parade with banners saying "Down with Rum," "Vote against Liquor," and "Protect the Child"; but it seems to me they should parade in Boston and Chelsea where there are plenty of bar-rooms to be reformed.

A parade in Clifftondale goes bumpety-bump on account of the mudholes in Salem Street.

THERE seems to be a marked difference of opinion among men and women as to what is sin. According to the women, practically every man in Clifftondale who amounts to anything will go to hell unless he reforms at the last moment. That appears to be the easiest way out, but would not work in case of sudden death, which seldom occurs in this town. Dying by inches takes several years. First they give up work, then hope, and then the ghost.

Smoking, drinking, and card-playing are sins as well as the Ten Commandments. In fact, the women think that fun of any description is an abomination to the Lord. Men appear to enjoy themselves the most, but they have to keep quiet and not give each other away. Women give each other away at the earliest possible moment.

## I N D E L I B L E

THERE was some excitement in Cliftondale last night, the first this summer, unless you could call a runaway excitement. I woke up in the night and the sky was orange red, so I got up quick. There were voices outside and people running, and just then somebody hollered fire. After that, I smelled smoke. I woke up father and mother, after dressing hastily, and beat it out the door before mother could say no.

The schoolhouse and fire station was on fire and the wood was old and dry as a bone. I never saw anything go up so quickly and both the fire engine and the hose cart were burned up. It is a good thing they did not keep horses there, as has been suggested time and time again in town meeting. It is also a shame the schoolhouse burned in summer when there was no school.

Now there is going to be a special town meeting so that Fred Eldridge can make a speech about building a new schoolhouse and fire station, which were both in the same building.

I AM glad there are only three more weeks before I go to the Conservatory of Music.

## LORD FAUNTLEROY

PREVIOUS to going to the Conservatory, my career and self-respect were nearly set askew by a pair of sissie pants. Had it not been for my presence of mind, there would have been no end to it.

Mother took me to Boston to buy a suitable suit and other appropriate articles, such as a four-in-hand necktie. First we got some shoes at a shoe-store, where they had slanting stools in front of the seats so the men who worked there could get a good view of your feet which you put in their lap. Mother asked for the largest boy's size, but the men soon found that the front half of my foot would not go into it. The nearest thing to fitting turned out to be size 8 AA, which cost \$2.75.

I guess mother thinks I will eat her out of house and home buying shoes.

Then we went to a big department store where there are more people than Cliftondale can boast of, and she spent a half an hour trying to buy some percale which turned out to be nothing but cloth. I felt like a fool standing there with a lot of women all that time. She did n't buy the percale after all,

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and we went to another department store where the performance was repeated, to my dismay. At the third store, she bought some which looked to me just like the percale in the other stores, but was two cents a yard cheaper. I would have given her the two cents to save all that wear and tear. I was afraid that if it took so long to buy percale, which is only cloth, it would be midnight before we got a suitable suit.

Then we went up an elevator with great difficulty on account of the large number of women. The ones who wanted to get out at "Ladies' Underwear and Knickknacks" were all stuffed into the back of the elevator, of course, and nearly suffocated me trying to get out at the first stop. It was the same all the way up to the top, where the nigger said "Boys' and Youths' Clothing."

I hate the sound of that word "youth."

We stopped in front of a counter which had a placard "Marked Down," and had almost decided after some time to take a suit with regular long pants, size 30, when the clerk, who was a sissie with polished finger-tips and glasses, said:

"Madam, perhaps you would care to see the knickerbockers."

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Mother stopped right in the crucial moment and said, "Thank you, I would," and we went to another counter.

Knickerbockers are sissie pants which are neither one thing nor the other, and which have buckles. The coats that go with knickerbockers have apron strings around the back and sides. The only pair I ever saw in action was on a boy named Theodore, who goes to private school, lucky for him.

When I saw what was up, I was mad enough to bust that clerk in the nose, consequences or no consequences.

"I don't want those trick pants," I said, and mother pinched my arm and told me to hold my tongue.

I had visions of Peter Brooks and the gang bringing me forget-me-nots to put in my button-hole and I knew I was doomed to be Lord Fauntleroy, to the delight of my playmates. Sissie clothes and music together would break down the strongest reputation.

My face got as red as father's winter undershirt and I could feel the heat from it.

"I won't wear anything but regular pants, so there is no use to buy them bloomers."

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"You will wear what is set before you," mother said.

"Yes. It's all right for you. You don't have to wear them."

Then mother got red, and the clerk tried not to laugh, and I knew I had made a tactful mistake in referring to mother's wearing pants, although I know by observation that she wears pants of a sort made of flannel.

Women in the prime of life are bashful about their clothes, but the clothesline, if nothing else, makes it plain to everybody.

The day was lost so far as I was concerned, and mother paid money for that suit of bloomers and the monkey coat.

I SPENT the next day planning suicide or to run away and join the navy, but I could not do that without a pair of long pants, so there I was. I looked in mother's pocketbook, but there was only two dollars and some change. I was just about at the end of my rope when food for thought struck me. From that time forth, I developed my plan.

WHEN Sunday came, I put on the sissie suit, after

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setting the clocks back so we would get in late and the gang would n't have a chance at me, what there is left of them around town. I always sit on the outside of our pew, and there are two nail-heads which stick out prominently, as I have learned while waiting for the end of sermons. I sat right close to the nails and hooked the side of my knickerbockers good and solid on one of them while I fastened the other into the coat with the apron strings.

When the Reverend Ezekiel Babson said, "Let us join in prayer," I stood up quick, and the result was beyond description. Mother was so upset she forgot to join in prayer and the people behind laughed, hell or no hell. I went out quick at the end of the prayer, holding myself together as best I could, and by the time mother reached home, I had removed any chance of a relapse with some nails in the barn.

Mother said she had a good mind not to let me go to the Conservatory, and father said that new suits don't grow on trees, and for God's sake next time get a suit for wearing apparel. After a time the ill wind blew over, and now I have some clothes which do not attract attention, only it is

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hard to get used to long pants flapping around my legs.

Tying a four-in-hand necktie is more trouble than hitching up a horse, because a horse does not stand in front of a mirror and you can see what you are doing.

THE text on that Sunday was "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out," which ought to hold good for knickerbockers as well.



## COINCIDENCE

I WAS safely launched into the Conservatory of Music day before yesterday and I am worried as a result of it.

The building is as large and nearly as complicated as a department store, only the clerks are girls instead of sissies. Mother paid my tuition at a ticket window.

Right in front of the main door, I jumped as if something big were moving towards me, and then I saw a bronze statue of a homely man with curly hair and a frock coat who did n't look as if he were afraid of God Almighty. I'll bet even Dr. Maginnis would n't have dared to sass him. On the stone block underneath the statue it said "Beethoven." I could n't look away, and stood there like a dummy with my eyes sticking out, and mother went away and left me without noticing it.

Then all of a sudden it dawned on me that Beethoven was the composer who wrote "Minuet in G" and "Farewell to the Piano," both of which I have at home. The Minuet is a graceful piece with a rhythm a little slower than a waltz, and the

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melody sings like sun on the sailboats. This puzzled me because Beethoven's statue looked as if he would be sailing through whirlpools in a thunderstorm, rather than dancing minuets with a white wig and short pants. It would be farewell to the piano he got mad with. He looks hurt and full of temper which he nearly bursts trying to hold in.

"Come along, slow poke, and get registered," mother said. Getting registered meant having my name, address, birthplace, age, sex, and similar matters written on a card. Mother answered the questions and the clerk wrote them down. There was nothing for me to do, so I don't see what I had to hurry for. Probably mother wanted to buy another couple of yards of percale, as the day was young.

YESTERDAY I went in to start my lessons. I showed my card at a desk, and a woman asked me a lot of questions about my previous experience and then told me to go to Room "G" on the right.

I knocked on Room "G," and a voice said, "Come in." Who should it be but Mr. Flynn, the Catholic which Mr. Chase, the music supervisor, wanted me to take lessons from in the beginning.

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"How do you do, young man," he said. "Your face looks familiar. Don't you live in Cliftondale? What is your name?"

"Samuel Graydon."

"Oh, to be sure." Mr. Flynn's voice was good-natured. "Let me see your card."

The piano was twice as big as ours, and shaped like a Sphinx, which is an Egyptian Deity. He opened it and got a chair for me and asked me to sit at the piano. I was frightened a little because the piano was so big, and I was wondering what would happen if mother knew they had Catholics for teachers in the Conservatory.

"Play something for me," he said. "Anything at all."

The first thing that came into my head was the "Farewell to the Piano," although, come to think of it, that is a funny thing to start taking music lessons with. The first two measures are "mf" or medium.

"Can you play without the music?" he said.

"Yes, sir," I answered, and I almost said, "Yes, Father." I was very careful with the first few measures, but my arms seemed to be quivering. The next two measures are supposed to be "p,"

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which means soft. When I stepped on the soft pedal, the keyboard jumped and I was so rattled I stopped and blushed.

"Your piano at home is not a grand, is it?" he said, not at all put out.

"No, sir," I replied.

"I have some matters to attend to," Mr. Flynn said. "You stay here alone and get used to the piano until I come back." Then he went.

I never knew a piano could have such a tone. The bass notes were deep as the ocean when the sky is cloudy and the treble was in tune all the way and just like rows of pearls. It was easy to play softly as well as loud. I played scales for a while, and got on to the soft pedal that moves the keys sidewise, and then I played the piece I had started, with no trouble at all.

When I finished, Mr. Flynn was standing behind me, looking attentive.

"Let me hear you play a study," and he put up Czerny's School of Velocity, Book I. The first study is mostly for the right hand and is in the key of C. It is easy to read.

"Now the next," he said, which is for the left hand.

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"You keep perfect time," he said. All the experts seem to be agreed on that. Keeping time is the easiest part of music.

"Try the scale of C, both hands, three octaves," he said. I did, and as I played it, it sounded more uneven to me than ever before.

"Now the key of G." Then he tried all the major keys, but could n't stick me.

"The fingering is correct but your thumb is awkward," he said. Then he sat down and played the scales and they were just like peas in a pod.

"You like music?" he asked, and I nodded. "You want to be able to play smoothly no matter how difficult it may be, don't you?" There was but one thing to be said.

"Well, you have a few bad habits we must correct before we really get started. Are you game to work for six weeks on the scale of C?"

"Yes, sir."

"Now let me show you." He told me how to use my thumb in a different way than Miss Clafin made me, and he cautioned me to practice slowly, raising the fingers high, but keeping the thumb always on the keyboard. He said the fourth finger had a tendency to come down too soon after the

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little finger, and darned if it don't. He gave me some "Gymnastics," he calls them, for the thumb. They are exercises written in pencil.

"Get a good round tone and listen to every note you play," he said in parting.

I DON'T know what to make of it. It would have been more sensible if I had gone to Mr. Flynn in the first place, Catholic or no Catholic, as Mr. Chase recommended.

The scale of C is a come-down from Grade V pieces, and I have got to play it for two and one half hours every day for six weeks. I will do well not to go off my nut listening to it.

WHY is it that if Mr. Flynn is good enough to teach in the Conservatory, he could n't make a living in Cliftondale, and had to leave because all the pupils went to Miss Clafin who does n't know beans?

## THE SCALE OF C

ONLY one more week and the scale of C will be over with. Mother was not at all pleased on account of their starting me all over again at the Conservatory. When I told her I had a bad habit with my thumb, she said it was new-fangled notions.

Parents should be seen and not heard with regard to music.

The only thing to break the monotony has been Hazel, who came home three weeks ago. She has a wonderful tan from swimming, and showed me where her bathing-suit was marked on her arms and back. There are certain things which worry me, however. When Hazel kisses me now, she does it the way Ethel Goodman did last summer. I have a feeling that she has not been true to me, and that she has been kissing somebody else at the beach who taught her that. Sloppy kisses make me tired. Otherwise, Hazel is the same old girl.

The first professional work I ever did was to play an accompaniment for Hazel last week at a Grand Army concert in Woburn for which I received \$1.50. Mrs. Knot, Hazel's mother, said she



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is glad I am to be Hazel's accompanist, because now she won't have to go all over creation with Hazel in order to come home with her. That is a very sensible view to take, it seems to me. I almost let the cat out of the barn at the concert by playing the scale of C, both hands, three octaves. I just caught myself in time. That would be a queer thing to spring at a concert, but I would just as soon do that as play Handel's Largo which a violinist did. I never go to a concert without hearing Handel's Largo.

Except for my professional work with Hazel, I am not supposed to play anything except what Mr. Flynn gives me, which, the Heavenly Father knows, is little enough.

Mother does not know that I am taking lessons from Mr. Flynn. If she did, it would be "good-bye, Conservatory," tuition or no tuition. Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and all other kinds of Christians are mixed up together in Boston. There is no other way out in a large city where there are so many people, unless you wear a button or something, and even then you would have to associate more or less, and why not?

Miss Stoddard, who is wise to the whole business,



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said we all are brothers and sisters and should live together as best we may. Come to think of it, Jesus made a remark something like that, and if I can find it in the Bible, I will pull it on mother if she starts anything. This Bible game has two sides to it.

Another thing that worries me is our piano. It is so different from the piano in the Conservatory. Some of the notes go down harder than others, and there is no tone to it. Mother says I ought to be thankful for the blessings I have. How can I play evenly if the notes on the piano stick, I would like to know?

What is the sense of being thankful for a blessing that is no earthly good?

I HAVE graduated from the scale of C at last, and now have G and D, which are just the same except for one and two sharps, respectively. It is not so monotonous now because I have two of Czerny's studies. I could not stand it if Mr. Flynn did not play two or three pieces for me at the end of every lesson. I remember them all through the week. We are building slowly but surely, Mr. Flynn says, and if he did n't have great hopes for me, he would not be so fussy.

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I hope his hopes are not like the pestilence that walketh at noonday.

THE piano question has found a ray of sunshine. The church is buying a new one for the Sunday School, which is downstairs. They asked me to play hymns for Sunday School and I said I would if I could practice on the new piano. Deacon Palmer, the superintendent, said he did n't see any objection and I did n't argue any further with him. So, in a couple of weeks I will have a decent piano for practicing, and I don't lose anything, because I have to go to Sunday School, anyway, to keep peace in the family.

The way things turned out, it is a good thing I was not thankful for the piano at home.

Father asked me why I could n't learn the fiddle also while I am at the Conservatory, so I can play "The Sailor's Hornpipe," which is father's favorite piece. I guess he thinks learning instruments is as easy as cleaning carpets, where, of course, it don't make much difference what kind of a carpet it is.

Nero started to learn the fiddle long before Rome caught fire.

## S A M U E L

PETER BROOKS has started to shave, but there is no use of my following suit because I have n't any whiskers to speak of and the ones I have are not visible.

Peter likes going to high school, all except lessons and some of the teachers, which he says are a nuisance.

It was so cold to-day that we started the furnace fire, and I am going to tend it this year, instead of father. I do not mind it, only the ash-sifter makes a squeak that sets my teeth on edge. It sounds worse than Jack Foley when he plays way up on the neck of his fiddle. Jack is playing with an orchestra which plays for dances. I never play ragtime, except by ear, and once in a while at parties when they want to sing. There is nothing to it, although I do not mind it the first two or three times. The only good violin teacher in this vicinity is a Protestant, so Jack Foley has not learned very well.

HAZEL wants me to learn to dance because at lots of affairs where I play her accompaniments, there is dancing afterwards.

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An affair differs from an occasion on account of the music and often dancing as well.

I think I shall have trouble because I am not what you might call graceful on account of my extra long legs and feet. Of course, I don't say anything about dancing to mother. She thinks dancing is like rum, cards, intemperance, and similar sins. All the Christians do not agree on this point, because the Episcopalians dance right in the building with their church.

Keeping from going to hell is more trouble than going, if there is one. They are talking now about hell being on earth. Father says that can't be true, because if it was, it would be next door to Cliftondale, and mother told him that the scoffers would repent when it was too late and there would be weeping and gnashing of teeth, as the Good Book says.

Every time I mention hell to Miss Stoddard, she laughs, although I should think it would be a delicate subject for an Atheist. If she is game to take a chance, why should n't I be?

If there is n't a hell, what about heaven? I asked mother if heaven is on earth, too, and she said, "Not so long as there is children."

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Pretty good for her. She don't relax like that very often.

WELL, so long. I must play the scale of A-natural a couple of thousand times.



## PART II: LENA





## PART II: LENA

### STEERAGE

LITTLE LENA BOROFSKY's eyes glow fiercely in the dense vapor which fills the steerage from bottom to top. Around her is misery, limp and crowded. Sick faces in shawls and sick children in heaps. Tar smell, grease, breaths of garlic, eight days stale, stench of unrelieved seasickness.

Who ever heard of lime-water in the steerage?

Mischa Borofsky, Lena's father, sits with his skull-capped head drooped on his chest, his cap showing black like a target. His streaked and stringy beard reeks with bits of food. Eight choking days in the steerage.

The little girl's stomach pit poises for a trembling, long-drawn swell. The wave-tossed liner starts to climb. Rising, *slowly rising*. Shoulders pull up, insides haul down. Still for a horrid moment. Then the dizzy, slow descent. Going down, *down*, oh, so slowly. Thud! — on the bottom of the boat.

Over and over again. Not a word in the steerage.

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Misery, huddled on vile floors, wrapped in colored shawls. Eyes closed, but not asleep. Misery only dozes and the lids flutter protestingly.

Lena has been ill, but fiercely ill. She does not take things calmly. Each maddening swell is meant for her. Each foot that tramps her gets a kick, even her heavy-handed father. No squatting for her. She either stands or falls. Eight long days of this, and each misfortune kindles those glowing eyes.

Her eight years in a peasant hut, her mother's weary death, are blurred and jumbled by these last eight days.

Which does your memory hold, years or days?

She is dressed in a shabby, one-piece garment, loose-fitting stockings and rough-sewn shoes. When her glowing eyes are turned, two thick braids of raven hair send out pure white spots of high light. Her body is thick and sturdy, but her hands, beneath the grime, are nicely shapen, with sensitive, tapering fingers. A body for a peasant girl, eyes for a Fury, hair for a Madonna, hands for an artist.

How do these things happen?

Lena is rebellious. Her rage has beaten down

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the quivering nausea. She will be sick no more. Her temples ache. She hates to breathe. Her sense of smell is straining. No growths or twists in Lena's nose. It is fine and straight and perfect.

She sees a ladder leading to the hatchway, which is open. She starts to climb, clinging as the boat lurches. Her dirty, black-rimmed fingers reach the top. Her raven head drinks in the open air. A steward sees and shoves her back with a gentle foot.

Ouch! White, flashing, perfect little teeth prick into his ankle and tight clutching hands grab his trouser leg. A shake, and Lena half slides down the ladder. Her father, roused by the commotion, knocks her down with a casual cuff. Lena glowers at the steward, who is laughing down the hatchway. She is pledging lifelong, silent hate.

Lena is a pretty name.

## PITTS STREET

PROBABLY you have never been on Pitts Street.

Shrill children, wobbly cobblestones, the scent of sour ash-cans preceded by a cloud of buzzing flies. A sweet-faced young Italian woman, babe in one arm, stoops to quiet a child at her feet, and a perfect breast hangs just inside the loosened waist. Two little Yiddies playing ball. One misses and the ball tips Giovanni's paint-can. He tips it back, as if enjoying a frolic. Giovanni is painting his little shop with dull green. A few yellow fronts, a dull maroon, and the brick-red livery stable break the rows of drab, dilapidated, wooden buildings.

How good a livery stable smells on Pitts Street!

Mother Shannon, who peddles cheap, flat bottled beer and sick girls on their very last legs, glares thickly through a slit in half-closed shutters, looking for sailors. Sound of her cane as she hobbles on the wood floor inside.

Rattle of iron-shod wheels over cobbles. Splash from mud puddles as two teams pass narrowly by the livery stable. Narrow stairways crowded with shawled and ear-ringed women, out of shape.

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There is swarming life on Pitts Street. Turn up your nose, stuff up your ears, brush your trouser leg where the puddle splashed, but there are faces to remember, and that young woman's breast was fresh and clean.

OLD MISCHA and Lena, just off the boat, walk hand in hand down Pitts Street. The old man looks resignedly blank, hands in opposite sleeves, Russian cap marking him in the motley, sidewalk throng. Lena's black eyes are devouring things. The upstairs windows, the heavy rattling teams, the pictures in the tattoo expert's grewsome shop. She stumbles down a cross-alley curb, but recovers with eyes still raised. In her hand is a bag of candy, placed there by a steward, for which he received a hard look.

Mischa stops still, raises his head and gravely sweeps the doorways up and down the street, his face perfectly blank. Coming toward him, an unmistakably Jewish figure. Long coat, flat derby tipped to thirty degrees back, broad forehead, hands hanging on arms which do not swing as he walks, his toes turned out and sharp knees bent. He spies Mischa. sees he is a "new bigginer," and

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stops with an avalanche of gutturals. Mischa joins in, turn and turn about being strictly observed. The newcomer points to a near-by doorway and shuffles on.

Into a narrow, crowded stairway go Mischa and Lena. The year is nineteen hundred and three.

How do immigrants get started?

If a man of fifty with a beautiful hungry daughter of eight, motherless, lands in a strange country, no relatives, no knowledge of language, scant funds, how would you advise him to proceed?

MISCHA appeared on the streets a few weeks later with an old, spavined horse, a rickety wagon, and assorted bits of junk and brown bags of rags and paper. Perched on the seat, with broad flat derby, flapping coat, and straggling whiskers, he looked his part.

A real, living Jew of the old school is the only national type which may be recognized by its representation on the vaudeville stage. The comedians do not overdo it. It is not in their power.

Mischa had native patience and an inborn passion for trade. He lacked a vocabulary, but made

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up for this deficiency with odd-jerked shrugs and shoulder lifts and eloquent palms and thumbs. At regular intervals, he cried "R-a-e-e-e-cks" like a dismal goat.

Lena soaked up knowledge as the angry sun draws moisture from the sticky August heat. The jargon of Pitts Street, adult Italian dialect, back-porch Yiddish, the slang-slapped English of the kids, the price of dry fish and hard dark bread. She asked not for information, she demanded it, and kept her black eyes fastened on her informant in a way which strangled incipient deception.

The old man did the cooking. The washing was not done. The old man peddled junk every day while the daughter ran wild on Pitts Street.

PITTS STREET is mostly Italian, with possibly ten per cent of Jews. In the evening, it changes a bit. Fruit-peddlers and organ-grinders return, overflowing the doorway crowds and filling up the windows. Laborers light up acrid pipes and play "Uno-duo." Women sort out their broods and keep them close as possible. They never say "Hush" to a child out of doors. From nooks and corners float the lilting gay waltz melodies of Italia, wheezed



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from accordions. The faulty chromatics of a hurdy-gurdy rise from the curb. From open first-floor windows come the sound of violins and snatches of tenor song from upstairs.

The faintest breath of music, even the whine of a mouth-organ, electrifies Lena. The delicate nostrils contract, the hands stop still in attitudes of natural grace, the black eyes soften. If the sound is of a violin, the black eyes grow moist.

One stifling evening, a few weeks after his rag business was established, Old Mischa was greeted by his little daughter.

“Papa, I got to play *scripka* (violin).”

Mischa stopped, looked stolidly at Lena, and rocked his head from side to side, clucking each time with his tongue.

RUMOR of the approaching school term reached Lena through the chatter of the children. She transmitted scraps of information to her father. The Italian-English of the landlord, the English-Yiddish of a neighbor Jew, and countless calisthenic gestures, cleared the puzzling situation.

Does n't it strike you rather funny to call a North-End tenement keeper a “landlord”?



## L E N A

On the opening day, Lena, shabby but scrubbed for the occasion by Giovanni's swarthy wife, followed the noisy throng to the schoolhouse and found herself crammed into a desk far too small for her. She tore through primary lessons like a frightened alley cat, covered by a swift-thrown pile of dusty papers. In a short span of months, she became her father's interpreter, scribe, and adviser. There are odd companionships in the complicated North-End bustle.

Lena's shabby clothes were mended and new ones made by Mrs. Giovanni. It is not much harder to sew for eight than for seven, Mary pity women! Lena's thick braids were tied with colored ribbons like the rest. A few at first made cruel childish fun at her expense and to their discomfiture.

## “R-A-E-E-E-E-CKS”

LENA has reached a grade where desks more nearly fit.

Miss Hardwick, thirty-five, Brookline, quite new to the North End, leaves the room unguarded a moment. Gusts of giggles, clouds of whispers, fusillades of flying spitballs, and playful, half-repressed disorder, as the door closes. Suddenly, from Boris Klein, three desks removed, a tormenting, long-drawn

“R-a-e-e-e-e-cks!”

High green hisses like a wildcat falling from a tree. Black eyes blaze. Lena’s face turns white hot. Swift hands feel for something. The inkwell! Straight at Boris’s head it flies, splashing a shower of drops and blots on children, desks, and clothing.

A swift, inhaled hush. The sharp voice of Miss Hardwick.

“CHILDREN!”

No terror in Lena, deaf with rage. She reaches Boris, over ink-splashed desks and pupils. The timid start to cry, the big ones start to grin. Miss Hardwick, with swift steps, pries the frenzied girl

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from Boris's hair. Blood trickles down his face, scratched deep on either cheek. He blubbers, Lena standing tense, fretting at restraining hands, determined to reach him again.

Miss Hardwick sees the ink splashes and gasps. Ruined clothes are held up for inspection. The head master is summoned. Not a word from Lena, eyes still blazing. Explanations are volunteered from every side. The teacher threatens, shakes. The culprit will not speak and her black eyes follow cringing Boris.

After school, the third degree in the stern head master's office. Not a word. Miss Hardwick, in desperation, half drags Lena home, and finds Old Mischa mending a tattered old coat. A swift attempt to tell the tale, but Mischa's face is wide and blank. His needle has remained poised far to one side. The teacher talks, gestures, shouts, her patience gone, and the old man stands up slowly. He nods and takes his yardstick. He thinks he grasps the idea. Lena has misbehaved.

His large hand grasps her shoulder. With a rip, her dress, which buttons behind, is peeled partly away. Swish descends the yardstick on the child's back. Again, again. Lena kicks and struggles, but

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is silent as a stone, as blows are rained on her wriggling back.

Miss Hardwick is one whom violence turns faint. Her head spins. She tries desperately to intercede. She clenches her hands, afraid of what she started. Old Mischa misunderstands. He thinks she is relating graver misdemeanors and lays on harder. He grasps Lena more firmly, and swish, swish, descends the yardstick. Welts appear faintly on the soft young skin.

The teacher flees in a panic down the stairway, tripping over a throng of peeping youngsters exulting over the "vipping." She tries to find a policeman, an American, anybody to save that poor child's life. She accosts Pietro, banana merchant, and he tries to find the fruit she wants. She hurries back and forth on the crowded street, faint and sick and apprehensive. She is drawn back up that terrible stairway by a force, her mind blindly trying to shut out blood-curdling pictures, her heart hammering.

The Borofsky door is open. Mischa is seated as he was before the fray, mending the tattered coat, needle poised far to the right. Lena peers through the dirty window, face still tear-stained, black eyes

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burning holes into the crowded street below, trying to pick out a face that laughed at her humiliation through the doorway. Pitts Street has resumed its continual, restless swarming. Mischa's stolid face has not changed during the entire incident.

The shaken teacher stops. She hesitates. What should she do? Half dazed, she decides the thing to do is to go home and go to bed. It is. She does.

MISCHA has performed a routine Russian duty in the only manner known to him. Lena had done wrong. She had been punished. The incident was closed.

The child bore no resentment. The pain was temporary and was dulled by her rage. The sharp hurts had subsided.

Her father had not been angry, to the extent of losing his temper. He had acted the part of a dutiful father in correcting his child. If he wanted his spavined horse to quicken his lagging steps, he struck it moderately with a stick. If his child transgressed, he did the same, calmly, the duration and severity graded to fit the offense. In the old country, if a peasant stole a hen, he was beaten with sticks, and the beating began instead

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of ending when the welts under the skin began to show.

It never entered Lena's mind to question her father's right to beat her. Next day, she appeared in class as usual, her back a trifle sore. White skin is easily bruised. A physician made a report to the school committee. On motion of the member who spent his youth in Volna, no action was taken.

But Boris Klein slunk fearfully on devious routes to and from school for many days and Lena's father was not mimicked a second time.

## SAD EYES, SCRIPKA, AND BLACK BRAIDS

A HORSE and man, daily associated, borrow characteristics of one another. Mischa's horse had no name. Sad Eyes will do.

Sad Eyes was a Jewish horse. He had a large, odd-shaped head with bulging proboscis. His ears were broad, large, and limp, and flapped in jerky rhythm when his legs moved. His knees were prominent and his gait eccentric. He was lean, but not thin. His worn-down hoofs turned out in the orthodox Jewish walk. His life was a dull routine. A half-hour after Mischa arose, Sad Eyes was fed and hitched to a rickety wagon. All day he minded his own business. When there was a watering-trough, he took the initiative and made for it. Mischa sat like a huge black bird, motionless, until Sad Eyes drank his fill. Then he gave one whack with the stick. Two whacks meant three stiff-legged hops and a jerky half trot for thirty yards. Two whacks came late in the day, as a rule.

Man and horse plodded on together, day by day, and not a single word was passed. Their eyes were half closed until a bargain presented itself. Then

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they were wide open, Sad Eyes looking back attentively. Mischa blatted "R-a-e-e-e-cks" about as often as Sad Eyes switched his moth-eaten tail. Fatalists. Stoics. Partners.

What took place behind the sad eyes and under the ridiculous flat derby? How far in did the gibes of the young and the scorn of the old penetrate?

Your guess is as good as anybody's.

Lena did not mind her poverty because she did not know exactly what poverty meant. They lived in one room, twelve by twelve, stuffy and dirty and squalid. A cot, a smaller cot, a worn wooden table, two scarred wooden chairs, a small cook-stove with long elbows of ill-matched stove-pipe, half rusted, half black, a dull, faded picture of Martha Washington, salvaged by Lena from a junk pile, made up the interior of the house.

Meals were plain and frugal, but Lena had no standard of comparison. "Kosher" they were, according to simple dietary laws, adequate for sustenance. Lena augmented her meals by snatches from near-by fruit-stands. The meals were regular and habitual. She had never known hunger; that is, the aching kind. The cost of food was nearly thirty cents a day, including feast days.



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In winter, Lena followed the example of Mrs. Giovanni and the other neighbors and brought in fragments of market boxes from Faneuil Hall. She knew all about the battles and massacres commemorated by the marks of houses and sidewalks, and could recite the preamble to the Declaration of Independence. Coal was purchased by the bag, figuring up to thirty dollars a ton. The dingy window went down in September and stayed down until April or May. Lena was cold, but never frozen. She thought it inevitable that she should be cold in winter and hot in summer.

Lena's clothes were warm and strong and conformed to the prevailing styles of Pitts Street. Do not think of her in a pink pinafore, or in the rags of a moving-picture beggar girl.

There was no ventilation through the window and little through the walls. The poor are more likely to stuff cracks with cloth and paper than to freeze. Ventilation cost thirty dollars a ton. Admitting cold air through a window from the wide, wide world, peddling bags of rags day after day for small coins, spending heaps of the small coins at the rate of thirty dollars a ton to heat the cold air, was a process too complicated for the primitive

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brain of Mischa. His clothes came from the second-hand pile, but they were warm and covered his angular body. He looked his part. He used no mattress and no pillow. Pennies and nickels became soiled dollar bills, with now and then a two. There was a small pot of coins in a tin pot on the shelf, and a pound tobacco tin full of soiled bills hidden away. Another bill was added from time to time.

Mischa's one extravagance was Pippins. Each evening he would shove Lena gently from the window, place a wooden chair directly in front, light his vile cigar, and puff away in deadly earnest. Lena did the talking, stirring up an occasional nod or cluck. Mischa slouched in his chair, broad feet turned outward, skull cap aloft, whiskers drooping. The Pippin was held by three fingers, all from underneath, and never did it remain in his mouth except while he was puffing. Then it was straight out from the middle. Between puffs it was held gingerly in front of his shirt. One cigar each evening, except, of course, Saturday.

Mischa was led by Lena to *Shul* (synagogue) and they observed "Yom Kippur" and "Rosh-ha-Shona."

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How would you like the job of sorting out the Hebrews from the Catholics on Pitts Street and making them keep to their own?

Life for the ragman was an unbroken round of duty which he never shirked and never complained of. Once in a great while, a Jewish acquaintance would come in of an evening. Then Lena would sit on the cot, past her bedtime, and the two wrinkled figures would sit and smoke, the visitor bringing his own cigar for safety's sake, in case his host had but one. There is not a more hospitable person in the world than a Jew, but purchases are made in small quantities in Pitts Street. The conversation would be in Yiddish at a low frequency and high voltage, turn and turn about being strictly observed.

Lena loved her school. She did not chafe at the routine at home because she knew no better. Sitting on the narrow stairway, she saw glowing cloud pictures of Washington Crossing the Delaware. She thrilled at thoughts of the great Lincoln. She would cry more readily at a circus parade than while she was being chastised. There were more parades than beatings, far more. Her real thrills came when flashes of melody reached her. Not a

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musical sound escaped her exquisite young ears. She would sit an hour outside a door where a beginner was playing five-note exercises on a violin. Her face, that of a raven-haired, white-skinned angel, with broad clean forehead, small vivid lips, delicate penciled eyebrows, and great dark eyes, lighted up from within, when music trembled her ear-drums. Lena did not dance when a hurdy-gurdy played. She stood motionless and held her breath.

How many times to her father she would say,  
“Papa, when can I play *scripka*?”

ALWAYS Lena went first to bed. Sleep came with the touch of the pillow. Mischa said no prayers. He stood over Lena's cot, his eyes on her white, cameo features, and the long black-fringed lashes. He looked up and down the thick, black braids, one on each side.

His old head rocked three times, side to side, left-right-left, and his tongue made clucking noises.  
Black braids!

THIS happened every evening, Saturdays and all.

## L E N A

LENA grew in beauty every day, or rather, every evening. Girl's faces with black braids on white pillows are at no disadvantage on account of shabby clothes.

Sometimes, Lena stood for hours in front of the Revere House, watching neatly and flashily dressed girls scurry in and steal out. Often, the same girl would go in and out many times, if she were lucky — and strong. Lena loved the smooth short skirts, the laundered, gauzy waists, the polished, high-heeled slippers, and gay, nifty hats. She watched the smooth, thin silken legs twinkle up the stairs, leather handbag swinging. She looked down at her wrinkled stockings and hitched them up.

Now you know why it is so hard to know who may and who may not be spoken to, as you walk through the North End.

IF any of those poor jaded girls had known that little Lena had selected her for an ideal, she would have sobbed herself to sleep that night, or, if the day had been one of the darkest, she might have swallowed a "bichloride tablet."

## THE CZAR OF WARD EIGHT

THE hour has come for Mischa's Pippin. A vile cigar. He pushes Lena gently from the window and places a scarred wooden chair directly in front.

*Do not ridicule a Pippin. Do not turn a wry nose when a whiff of five-cent smoke starts tickles in your throat. A long ways from Havana, to be sure, but Pippins have their uses.*

*In the North End are ragmen and men who sell collar buttons and shoestrings and men who deal in faded clothes. Flat, low-crowned black derbies and whiskers. You know — the Sheenies.*

*They have not missed a day's work since their great seasickness.*

*They have not smoking-jackets and hammered-brass ash-trays on pedestals, nor Havanas or Sumatras by the box. For a while they have next to nothing at all.*

*They sit not on screened front porches of bungalows, neither sit they on Morris chairs in apartments.*

*The Sheenies dress in hand-me-downs and the ashes*

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*drop on the floor. They sit by windows in the North End, and for a while they have next to nothing at all.*

*What does a Sheenie dream of, smoking his five-cent smoke each evening?*

*Never ridicule a Pippin.*

ONE evening brought Mischa two guests. Lena borrowed a chair from Pietro's wife and then went to the branch library to read history. American history.

The talk was all in Yiddish. One of the black-coated Jews looked close to prosperous. He did most of the talking and his gutturals sounded kind and helpful. Mischa clucked and rocked his head. The third Jew rocked and clucked.

The only word in English was a name. It was the name of a notorious politician, a ward boss, a czar. The visitor would have spoken more reverently of Father Abraham, perhaps, but not nearly so cautiously. He did not pronounce the name as you might hear it in the Back Bay. He did n't say a word about graft or crooked politics, and you almost always hear these things mentioned in connection with the name of Martin J. Mahoney, Czar of old Ward Eight.



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In the course of the evening, Mischa took his pound tobacco tins from their hiding-place and counted wads of soiled small bills.

All three rocked their heads and clucked.

Lena returned from the public library and the visitors patted her raven head and spoke in softer Yiddish. They picked their way down the narrow stairway and were gone.

THE next evening, Mischa and one of the guests knocked on the outside door of the Herricks Club in the North End. It was a busy evening. The city election was not far away. Disreputable, furtive figures slunk in and out, but they did n't stay long inside. They had work to do, and they seemed to know exactly what it was, when they came out. A loud-vested Irishman with a breath answered the timid knock. He listened a moment to the other Jew. Mischa's face was expressionless.

"I'll see the Old Man," said the Irishman.

Three newspaper-men came forth from the inner sanctum, and they looked as if they were in no doubt as to what they had just heard.

"You got to hand it to Martin," said one.

The lieutenant ushered the prosperous Jew and



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Mischa into the Presence. At a desk, in his shirt-sleeves, sat an Irishman with a prodigious jaw and a high, bald forehead, chewing a toothpick. He looked straight at the spokesman, who instinctively recoiled. Martin always takes the offensive.

"Well, what do *you* want? Be quick about it. I'm busy."

The words shot out like a spiteful exhaust. Martin seemed to push against the floor with his toes to emphasize and project each syllable. The Jew explained apologetically. Mischa stood motionless. At every word, his eyelids fluttered a trifle.

"What does he want with a second-hand clothing dealer's license? Ask him?"

Levine turned to Mischa with a gust of Yiddish. Martin chewed his toothpick impatiently.

"He says he wants his daughter Lena should play *scripka*."

"Play scripchur? What's that?"

"*Scripka*. Fiddle."

Martin relaxed a bit. "How old is Lena?"

"Twelve."

"How many other children?"

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"Lena is the only one. Her mamma, *olov hasholom*, died in the old country."

"Huh! Come back Tuesday. I'll fix you up. Give his name to Mike."

The lieutenant opened the door and took the necessary data in the outer room. Then the Jews shuffled out. Mischa heard the details on the way down the street. His face was just the same.

That night, he shook his head back and forth five times, left-right-left-right-left, instead of three, as Lena lay asleep, and one of his hard fingers touched a thick, black braid. He muttered something which sounded like "*olov hasholom*."

*Olov hasholom* means "Peace to her soul," so he could n't have meant Leijinke's (Little Lena).

NEXT day Sad Eyes was sold and a few more soiled small bills went into a tin box. Nothing wasted in the junk trade.

There were just as many bills in the box as there were before the visit to the Herricks Club. Don't forget that.

It is said that Martin is a grafter, that he has salted down his pile, but it is also said that he does not hand over soiled, small bills through the wire

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cage window at the bank. It is said that he hands in crisp, new, big ones, and that there are plenty more where those bills come from.

More power to him!

## GREEN STREET

GREEN STREET is not far from Pitts Street, as the sparrow flies. Probably you have seen it on your way to the North Station.

Ready-made coats and trousers with round, white tags and prices crossed conspicuously. Clusters of Golden Balls, hung in threes, on the level of pigeon-stained street lamps. Windows, dust, and windows. Jostle from a passer on the narrow brown brick sidewalk. Car tracks and not so many kids. Bright brass trombones in windows, old clarinets in worn green-lined cases with the snap broken off, dice, old watch chains, mandolins. Watches, cut-glass stickpins. A black-capped Shylock peers through a queer small one-eyed glass at the works of a cheap watch, run down. He shakes his head rudely. A sheepish, shabby man shuffles out, avoiding your eyes, turning his head away from the coffee, smoke-tinged fog from a lunch-room door.

Hard-hearted, that pawnbroker. By the way, did you give that bum the price of a meal?

A drug-store with two hundred suspensories

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and four white-painted legs in rubber stockings, red-brown douche bags, hot-water bottles. It is painted yellow.

A window labeled "Leather Goods" displaying pasteboard suitcases and traveling-bags, and a trunk, inside out, with greenish-gray compartments lined with bedroom wall-paper. Slap, slap of a cop's flat foot. He rings his box and slaps slowly down the street. He sticks his curly head and vigorous shoulders in a lunch-room door and a Greek says, "'Ello, Pat." "Hello, yourself, Short Order." Whiff of grease spilled on the gas-burner. A Salvation Army meeting-place, floor and walls painted slate blue. "Come to the Fold," clasped hands and a cross, painted in black on the pane.

You remember Green Street. The meeting-place of greenhorns working up, and ne'er-dowells, sinking down. There are heartbreaks but few tears. There are hopes but few smiles. There are deadbeats and failures and thugs and sharks. There are also some *high*-priced watches in the hock shops.

Did you ever lose a ticket?

In nineteen hundred and seven, the sour-mash stench of beer and rot-gut whiskey, tobacco spit

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and smoke, and the ribald, senseless, drunken babble came through the swinging doors on week-day evenings. Sunday nights it came through back doors or side doors. Across the street, a portable organ wheezed, a cornet blared, a lady sergeant piped, and nine down-and-outers stood, caps in hand, through all five verses of "Rock of Ages." A down-and-outer has a queer way of standing. His shoulders slouch, his knees falter at his weight, his hands forever fumble something, and he dodges if quick motions are made.

SUCH things should n't be. They are a nuisance. Why can't men and women stand on their feet and be self-supporting? Why should the lazy and shiftless come whining around for meals? Has n't a respectable citizen enough to do to keep his own out of the poor-house? They would n't take a job if you gave it to 'em. Some of them clean up more money panhandling than a working-man can make honestly.

Shiftless people make me sick. They'll get no sympathy out of me.

ONE day in nineteen-seven, Mischa walked over to

Green Street, peering silently into windows as he walked. The clang of the pussy-footed patrol did not startle him. He shuffled along alone, but his hand never left his inside pocket, where a sheaf of bills reposed.

He entered the door of an empty shop and stood a moment, looking gravely into corners. For quite a while he stood there. A wagon drove up and stopped outside. A Jew dismounted and came in: the one who looked almost prosperous. The wagon was loaded with hand-me-downs and caps and derbies. The two men spoke in Yiddish as armful after armful was dumped inside on the floor of the shop. They sat awhile on piles of coats, baled together, and the other man brought forth two ten-cent cigars and handed one to Mischa. They conversed gravely, turn and turn about.

A sheaf of bills was passed — fives and tens. First they were dimes and nickels and they grew to dollar bills, with an occasional two. Now they are fives and tens and buy a stock of second-hand clothing. They may go farther. Keep your eye on them.

DID the other Jew take advantage of Mischa?

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Did he soak him? Were there full two dozen coats in each bundle? Mischa did n't count them. Mischa did n't quibble on the price. He would have argued with a Christian ten minutes over fifty pounds of rags and looked the whole bag over. Was he taking an awful chance? Did that prosperous Jew take advantage of his brother on the upgrade?

The answer, my friend, is "No." Shakespeare, who wrote a play called "The Merchant of Venice," never lived on Green Street. Shakespeare wrote a play called "Hamlet" also, but there are Danes outside the asylums. Furthermore, there are ladies in the British Isles who do not walk in their sleep.

LENA and her father moved into the little room behind the second-hand store. The room was twelve by *sixteen*, and contained a table with an oil-cloth top, four wooden chairs, a washstand in the corner, and a stove. There were cloth curtains on the window. Lena's cot was screened off in an alcove by a drapery with vertical bluebirds and horizontal golden apples. She took over the cooking some years before and the meals



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cost more than sixty cents a day. Lena learned to make *gedämpfte kalbfleisch* from Mrs. A. Levinsky. She also drew the pasteboard sign on the door.

### M. BOROFSKY CLOTHING BOUGHT AND SOLD

MISCHA'S vocabulary enlarged somewhat, to fit the second-hand clothing business, but still left much to be desired. He resorted, in the main, to shrugs and shoulder lifts and eloquent palms and elbows. His tin boxes filled more rapidly than they did on Pitts Street.

Lena's ears were sharp, in the back room, and questions from customers which puzzled Mischa were answered by a girl's contralto voice which meant business. Customers often left their old clothes behind, and these were sold to a Jew with a horse and rickety wagon who called out "Regs-de-bot" about as often as his horse switched his moth-eaten tail.

Nothing wasted in the second-hand clothing business.

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ON the afternoon before the Thirtieth of May, Mischa closed his little shop and was led by Lena to the school for "Exercises." Lena is in the last grade and her raven hair is coiled up on her head. Her clothes conform to the standard of Green Street, and are neat and clean, but not just right. Her fingers have not been dirty for some time.

The school hall was crowded that afternoon with adult Wops and Harps and Sheenies, and their eyes were bright when Lena recited "Barbara Frietchie," although some of them did not understand. Naturally, they would think Frietchie was an adjective.

Foreigners should be made to learn the English language.

The only time the old folks nodded or drowsed a bit was during the last hour of a story of Libby Prison and Gettysburg by Corporal Nathan, aged sixty-six, Grand Army. The young folks kept awake for this, and they sang "The Star-Spangled Banner" at the close in a way that made the veteran's eyes go dim.

Patriotism is a word the North End cannot pronounce as well as they do it over the hill on Beacon

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Street where they talk "Americanization" and ape the English.

MISCHA'S face did not change during the entire incident, unless you happened to be looking at his eyes when Lena finished "Barbara Frietchie."

## SHOPPING

IN the summer, business was good, and Lena was on deck all day to answer questions. Customers changed their tone sometimes when Lena pierced them with her eyes.

Lena is a pretty name.

In August, there was another conference with the prosperous Jew. The conversation was in Yiddish, but in the midst of it, Lena burst from the back room and threw her arms wildly around her father's neck and sobbed as if her heart would break. Joy acts that way sometimes.

The visitor patted her raven hair, the rich, unruly coils of which were slightly disarranged by her typhoon of affection.

THE next day, a neighbor tended Mischa's little store and he went with Lena downtown to do some shopping.

"Mine little girl should have clothes like a lady for the Conservatory," he said in Yiddish. They bought a neat suit, like the finest in the Revere House and a pretty waist and shoes and stockings.

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Did Mischa quarrel with the price? Were the marcelled salesladies civil to him?

The answer, my comrade, is "No."

DOES N'T it make you sick the way these Jew girls sport swell clothes?

THEN Lena had a word or two to say. "Should her dear papa look like a ragman? Should n't he have swell clothes? Is n't he a business man now?"

They went into a big department store, where two thousand men and women are employed at hard-living wages. They took an elevator, with great difficulty on account of the large number of passengers. The ones who wanted to get off at "Ladies' Underwear and Negligee" were all stuffed into the rear of the car and nearly spoiled Lena's new shoes trying to get out at the first stop. "Say, have a heart!" "Dear me!" It was the same all the way up to the top, where the nigger said "Men's and Youths' Clothing."

Youth is a silly word.

They stopped at a counter which had a placard "Marked Down," and Mischa, after fingering the goods, said, in Yiddish, that he had just as good

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for half the money. A clerk, who was a fresh guy with polished finger-tips, stood quite close to Lena — until she raised her eyes.

“Perhaps you would like to see something better,” he said.

“Where are the first-class suits?” said Lena in a voice which meant business and sudden death.

They crossed the carpeted aisle and priced a modest gray. Up went Mischa’s hands. He launched a gust of gutturals and strode out. Nothing Lena could say would detain him in that store.

WHEN they had left, the fresh guy yawned and looked at the clock and said:

“These tight-wad Kikes give me a pain. Say, Clarence, did you pipe that black-haired frail that just blew in and out with Isaac?”

## THE VIOLIN

BOSTON is Utopia for lovers of ancient places and articles, but the Labyrinth for strangers in a hurry.

You know the business district and the shopping district and the subways and tunnels and theaters and ball-parks. You have hurried through the Common and the Public Garden, to the North Station or the South Station. You may have bought chickens and roasts in Faneuil Hall Market on Saturday. In your childhood days, you may have viewed the Holy Grail series in the Public Library and wondered innocently anent the nature of a Grail.

If you are a Conservative, you know State Street and Milk Street and one or two good dining-rooms. You swear by the "Transcript" and at the "American." Conservatives buy newspapers, but seldom read them. Nothing but crime and scandal.

If you are a Radical, you know Station Three and the Hill from Louisburg Square on down, and one or two bum Bohemian restaurants. You think the "Transcript" is a joke, and you know the

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"American" makes first-class carpet lining. Radicals read newspapers, but seldom buy them. Nothing but capitalistic propaganda.

If you are a tourist, you know the big, blue Rubbernecks where you jump in and shell out, and then the man takes his megaphone and it's all over but the shouting. You view the place where the Colonial schoolboys interviewed General Stark, the John Hancock place, the churches, North and South, respectively, in one of which Paul Revere hung either one or two lanterns. You have met that charming lady marked "Boston Guide," and received fifty dollars' worth of anecdote and history for fifty cents in cash and twice that much in shoe leather.

What does that woman wear on her feet?

You have taken the harbor trip and seen the unguarded forts and the unused piers and the undeveloped resources. Perhaps you stood under the spreading chestnut tree — or elm, which was it? — where Washington addressed the troops. You have visited the State House with its gilded dome and silver tongues and bronze statues and no end of brass.

The Old State House, where the Red Men and



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the Blue Laws were framed, the Old Frigate Constitution, and the Old Howard, all are landmarks, excepting the Frigate.

In Charlestown, Bunker Hill goes up and real estate goes down. Ever try to get a room in Cambridge in the fall?

There is gray New England granite, ruddy Chelsea bricks, aged paintless wood from Maine and Vermont, and new creosoted shingles from Oregon and Washington.

Natives get from place to place, but are rusty on the landmarks. Visitors know the landmarks all too well, but lose their hotels regularly.

Streets of Boston may be mastered, but the alleys are a different matter. It takes the real city breed to know the alleys.

FATHER and daughter found an obscure alley with wooden buildings, and toy sidewalks, and old-timers. It was lined with weathered signs denoting crafts in which patience is all and speed is nothing. Crafts in which the methods do not change from one century to another. Stores in which the oldest article is the dearest and the one most reluctantly sold. There may be purchased old, old

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books you have long forgot the name of, if you can quote a line or two.

Do you ever get by a second-hand bookstore?

At the end of the alley, the oldest of the old-timers, Adolph Kugel, made violins and violoncellos and violas. A hard place to find, but musicians whose names are on the tongues of nations have found it time and time again and have left there instruments they would not have trusted to their Emperors or their wives. The soda clerk of the drug-store backing into the alley calls Adolph an "old geezer." Violinists who are rude to royalty call him "Herr Kugel." In either case, Adolph smiled gently at the speaker, for he loves everybody, even his landlord, to whom he owes rent. All violin-makers are amiable. It is the makers of player pianos and phonographs and flutes who beat their wives.

Mischa and Lena entered the dim instrument shop. The girl was never lovelier. Her dark eyes sparkled with intense joy, her cheeks were flushed, and her raven hair and white forehead made a striking picture in the soft surroundings. Adolph smiled and bowed.

Think of bowing to a Sheenie.

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“So! The young lady is to play violin.”

Adolph stood very close to Lena, and he did not change his position when she raised her eyes to him. He put a kind hand on her shoulder and looked into her face reverently. The psychic bond between musicians was sealed. Suddenly, Adolph felt a glow inside and his faded eyes lighted, and he sighed. He took up one of Lena's delicate hands, the left, and she let it lie relaxed in his palm. He looked it over thoughtfully.

“So,” he said, and he wiped his spectacles. In a sort of trance, he walked to the back of the shop and took from a dusty shelf a violin case which he wiped clean with the tail of his coat. The violin was a lady violin with a slim, smooth, thoroughbred neck and throat. It had grace and symmetry and soul. The perfect back shone with fine-grained beauty. Where has man traced such patterns as are found inside of trees? The varnish was rich and mellow and the least bit clouded where the back had touched the box. Adolph tested the sounding-post and tuned the strings. At every pizzicato, he cocked his head and a liquid drop of sound fell from ceiling to floor. Lena's heartbeats accelerated.

The violin-maker closed the case, after wrap-

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ping the instrument in black old silk. His last look inside was wistful. Lena trembled. Her arm shook as she clasped the case tight to her side to be sure it could not fall.

The price? A hurt look passed Herr Kugel's face as he took the fifty dollars. A sweet look came as he said, "Auf Wiedersehen." A sad look came as he watched them down the street. He wiped his spectacles again and sighed and shook his head. He stood before a blank space on the shelf and wept, and he shuddered at the end as he saw the bills still in his hand.

Adolph was seventy. Fifty years before was born to Frau Adolph Kugel, a daughter. The Kugels lived in a little town in Austria, near enough to Vienna so that musicians whose names are on the tongues of nations left their instruments with Franz Kugel, Adolph's father. In that little town, Adolph learned to make violins and violas and violoncellos. The daughter was called Elizabeth. Soon after she was born, Adolph commenced a violin for her, and it took him many painstaking hours over a period of several years, but the Frau died and the daughter died, and when Adolph recovered from the plague, he emigrated to forget, and the

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violin in question is a lady violin with a smooth, slim neck and throat.

Fifty dollars! And he had given it to Lena, scarcely knowing why. The old void started throbbing and the faces of two Elizabeths haunted the dim old shop.

*People hold their breaths and try to hold their tears as violinists play. They think of earthly things in heavenly ways. Sobs are noiseless, fearing to disturb the theme.*

*At the end, applause. A storm of hand-clapping and rubbing, rolling echoes in the persecuted air. People think they do it for the artist, but, in fact, they do it for themselves. They pound their hands to soften the transition.*

*The artist bows and is glad. He is appreciated.*

*The composer? The creator? The man who dreamed the music? Where is he? Dead or far away. He comes in for fleeting praise by the few who know of him. He is mentioned.*

*But the voice inside the pattern of fine-grained wood?*

*Gentle fingers rubbing and carving and fitting. Days and days and years. Shoulders stooping, eyes*

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*dimming, but the gentle fingers rubbing and carving and polishing. Care, patience, gentleness. A task well done. All the hopes and loves and baffled aspirations of the maker go through his finger-tips and take haven for all time in that resonant, pure-grained instrument.*

*Nobody thinks of that while the concert sounds. The toil and sorrow that gives the voice its timbre is heard and felt, but the artist gets praise for that. He should, in part. It took him years to find it. Who besides the artist has a thought for the violin-maker, unless God may be counted, for God distributes patient joy and sorrow.*

*Applause does n't matter, anyhow. The listeners applaud to vent their own dismay to be on earth again.*

LENA stood before her violin all evening, looking raptly at it. She was fourteen years of age. Surely such intensity could not accumulate in such a time.

Mischa smoked his Pippin.

The girl plucked the strings gently and heard the pizzicato water-drops of sound go "plunk" from roof to floor of the low back room. Never once did she touch the bow. She knew by instinct she must wait till she was told.

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The next day, Lena entered the Conservatory. She looked upon the statue of Beethoven at the entrance and it seemed to say, "Be resolute. Be brave and conquer." Her will threw out electric sparks. She paid her tuition at a ticket window. She found Room "K" without difficulty and knocked without timidity. Herr August Reinhardt opened and smiled.

"So! You are to study violin. *Ganz gut!*"

He looked at her artist's fingers and said "So!" He asked her about her previous lessons, and when she said, apprehensively, that she had had none, he said "So!" with a still more pleased inflection. Then he took the violin case from Lena's reluctant hand and removed the instrument carefully. He started in surprise, and a very short "So" escaped under his breath. He tried the strings with his fingers and icicles dripped through winter morning sunshine. He took out the bow and rubbed it again and again with a fresh block of resin.

Then came a tone on the G string, the string which knows the depths. The lady violin knew what was expected of her. She was a thoroughbred and went through the ceremonies of introduction in a courtly manner. Herr Reinhardt scratched his



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head and looked closely at Lena, and he saw her great black eyes were wet. "So!" he said with a rising, long inflection.

Patiently, he showed her how to bow. Astonishment came to her as it dawned suddenly that the bow was of the utmost importance. She had always thought of the violin. The bow! At last he let her draw it on an open string. A jagged, tremulous wail resulted. Pain paled her cheek. She hesitated. What was the matter?

Then the thought returned. It was that bow. She concentrated fiercely on that long, ungainly thing. She would *not* make ugly sounds. The new tone started feebly and tremolo, but it became firmer toward the end. Her second was better than her first. Herr Reinhardt bobbed around with little hints and pats and grunts. He stood her before the mirror.

How glad a looking-glass must feel at such a time.

*What deserves more pity than a looking-glass?*

*Broken faces stare therein and see themselves.*

*The bearded doctor says, "You will recover, never fear."*

*What does the mirror say? A mirror cannot lie.*



## LENA

*It says, "Get ready."*

*The shaven priest says, "Peace in Heaven."*

*The leering glass says, "Worms."*

*The husband stammers, "You are never old to me, my darling." But the mirror flinches and says, "Drudgery and children leave their marks. How do you look to yourself, old has-been?"*

*Lies of preachers.*

*Lies of doctors.*

*Lies of lovers.*

*But the glass can tell no lies. All that flat, cold, cruel thing can do is tell the truth and rims of bitter mould collect beneath the gilded frame.*

*When 't is cracked, there is hope for it.*

*When 't is smashed, there is rest for it.*

LENA was instructed in bowing and told to practice with her bow arm to a looking-glass, always on the open strings at first. Tone she must get. The rest would follow.

What a day!

She walked on air to Green Street and the store. Again she threw her arms around her father's neck and sobbed, receiving clucks and shoulder pats.

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IN the afternoon, Lena, flushed hot with excitement of her first practicing, noticed something new about herself which frightened her. What could the trouble be?

She ran in breathless terror to Mrs. Orenberg, who comforted her and told her what to do and mothered her a bit.

What a day! Lena entered two new worlds on that September day.

WEEKS passed, and soon Herr Reinhardt's days of frightful wails and tortured squeals from large and small beginners and new, underseasoned wood, and scantily resined horsehair, were illuminated by three bright hours a week. Lena's three hours a week. For forty plodding years, Herr Reinhardt had hoped for such a pupil. He had the heart of a musician, but he also had the luck of a musician. Things had kept him down. Sickness, babies, bank failures, fickleness of women, a careless God's whole repertoire. He had never reached the concert stage, but he had taught those who have.

How do such things happen?

They worked. She did twice her span of hours. How he strained to find a fault. A sixteenth of an

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inch in the elevation of the elbow meant a pat and an instructive "So." Every finger in the girl's left hand had to learn its proper curve. Every joint had to be just "So." They forsook the open strings and romped with five whole notes, a sweep of the bow to each. The first lesson in which Lena made her own notes on the strings gladdened the old teacher's heart. Her ear was on the job. She heard and corrected each note to the precise pitch.

ONE evening, she started to practice and turned dead white at the first note. Something was wrong. The tone of her violin was not its own. It was dead. She looked it over. The grain was perfect. Not a crack or blemish. What had happened? As she tipped it, the sounding-post rolled and rattled inside. She questioned her father in Yiddish. Mischa was not guilty. He knew that violins were not for such as he.

Lena was frightened. She hurried to the Conservatory, but Herr Reinhardt was not there. What should she do? Then she thought of the alley of old-timers and hurried thither. As she approached the shop of Kugel, she heard sounds like an organ of violins and deeper strings. Chords, each

## I N D E L I B L E

separate note of which throbbed and sobbed and vibrated from the direct touch of skillful fingers. Goblins and ghosts and mischievous gray mist shapes tread the alley of old-timers, emanating from the shop of violins, each ghost abruptly rounding a weather-beaten corner as the music stopped.

A string quartette within, just ending something minor and fantastic and weird. Yes, it was from Schumann. Who else makes ghosts walk alleys of old-timers — ghosts without malice toward adolescent beauty.

Lena timidly entered the shop, and Herr Kugel looked up with an involuntary glad cry. He had prayed she would come that he might touch her once again. When he learned the reason for the visit, he laughed reassuringly and swiftly readjusted the fallen sounding-post. Lena's desire overcame timidity. Might she stay to hear the music?

Might she? How rare in human experience does the aching desire of two so closely coincide, so that each in receiving may give. On and on the old-timers played. Haydn, D major. Exultation held in bonds which do not chafe. "Joy to the World!" Schubert, a simple soul overflowing with melody. A humble heart made just a trifle happier by the

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clinging hands and laughing eyes of friendly children than it was saddened by the ridicule of thoughtless men and the neglect of empty women. You know how Schubert's theme dips like a flying fish from major into minor. Beethoven, and Lena was tense and swept by tonal storms which urged to stand and face them, head thrown back. The violins sang, the viola purred electric currents, and the 'cello, sobbing, held and anchored the rest. Never had Lena heard such music. Snatches of the melodies of Pitts Street, single violins through doors, but never had she dreamed of such as this. She sat like a statue, scarcely breathing, and the old-timers thrilled and spent themselves. Her fervor was contagious. They felt obliged to do their best. They would have played the night for one swift touch on the young girl's hair.

At the end, she was made to promise she would come again. Each Tuesday night they met in the alley of old-timers. She told Adolph of her lessons. Herr Reinhardt? An old friend and a very fine man. She would do well and she must work hard.

The violin which Lena carried had been sought by many. Adolph had refused two hundred dollars, and the landlord, to whom he owed rent at the

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time, approved most heartily. His landlord's name was Otto, and he played second violin each Tuesday night. They all approved Lena as the mistress of that lady violin.

## PIPPINS

LENA left the alley in a trance and started back to Green Street. She was not nervous at night, for she had often traveled back and forth on Pitts Street. Music was unfolding to her. Great clouds were rolling and opening and the light from beyond was glowing, stronger and stronger.

“Hello, kid.”

Directly in front of her, on a deserted sidewalk by a Tremont Street burying-ground, was a “fresh guy,” slightly drunk. Daytimes, he sold Men’s and Youths’ Clothing in a big department store.

The fresher a man is naturally, the worse he holds his liquor.

“What do you say to a little stroll, eh?”

Lena recoiled and her hand flashed quick for a hat-pin, a long steel shiny hat-pin. Lena was not exactly afraid. Her dawning womanhood within her shrank from eager looks of men, but she was not quite afraid. Her accoster mistook her hesitation and continued his oily babble. Her eyes were hidden from his by shadows. If he had known that she was surveying his flat chest and ribs for a spot

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where there was no button or fountain pen, he would have stopped short.

“You go on about your business before you come to grief. I know your like. Shame on ye.” This from an Irish voice behind her. It belonged to a middle-aged man named Flynn, a teacher at the Conservatory.

Lena thanked him and went away, the spell of the music broken.

How fortunate Mr. Flynn happened along at just that moment! How fortunate — for the dependent relatives of that young man!

WHEN Lena reached home, Mischa was lying flat on his cot, asleep. Never before had he retired until Lena was safely in dreamland. The girl put her violin carefully in its place by her cot, and stood beside her prostrate father. How seamed his stolid face! His patience did not leave him, even in sleep, but how tired he looked! His appetite, she remembered, had been sluggish lately. His hands trembled slightly as he raised a soup dish to his mouth to cool it, or as he hung a coat high in the window.

Poor tired father! She kissed his forehead lightly



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and woke him gently. He fell back once or twice before he could sit up straight. Lena helped him undress and watched as he dozed right off to sleep again. She covered a crack under the door leading to the store in order to stop a possible draft. The windows, of course, were shut tight so there was no trouble from that quarter. She gave her violin a final, good-night inspection before undressing. As she slipped off her waist, she noticed how her breasts were growing and her shoulders rounding out, and she was pleased.

Next morning, Mischa lingered in bed beyond his usual hour and ate very little for breakfast, and when Lena returned from the Conservatory in the afternoon, he asked her to watch the store so he might rest awhile. The girl was depressed all night. She could not shake off the cloud of impending disaster. Men like Mischa do not rest until the day is done.

For three nights there had been no Pippin.

Do not ridicule a Pippin, or a Sheenie getting tired. Five-centers and hand-me-downs have their uses and leave their voids.

## PEARL AND OPAL

PASSING the Revere House on her way to Green Street late one afternoon, Lena met her school-friend, Mary, on her way down the steps from the Grotto. Mary was two or three years the older and had been christened "Maria" down on Pitts Street. Her beauty was warm and Neapolitan and fully developed. Her eyes were large, the tone of a wood brook, shaded but running over yellow sand. Her waist was supple and her olive bust soft and not quite visible through the pink "Crêpe de Chine." Ribbons of undergarments slipped on her shoulders. Mary Carbone looked ashamed, and lowered her eyes as she came upon Lena that afternoon by the Revere House.

They walked together toward Green Street, pearl and opal side by side, and Lena told of the Conservatory, her lessons and her violin, the clothing store, her father. Mary told of her father's going to Italy to defend his native land against its ancient enemy, Austria, of her mother's illness, and

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of a manager of a Five-and-Ten who got his face slapped for him. Mary avoided the subject of her present employment, since she lost the Five-and-Ten job, but as she stepped over a high curb, her tight skirt lifted and revealed a folded bill or two just below the silken knee.

*Olive skin shows deep beneath pink gauze silk.*

*Olive skin shows clean in fine silk hose.*

*Young women sway and laugh as they balance high purple-clustered baskets of grapes. . . .*

*Grapes are not as happy in a hothouse as in a vineyard, but they grow, after a fashion.*

THERE were many things Mary did not talk about. She did not mention that, in her eleventh year, another little girl, whose mother was also busy with the younger children, had taught her habits destructive to sex health and self-control. She did not say that she had been "picked up" by a care-free young student with an automobile and that his first touch had set her blood to blazing. She omitted that part of the story about the doctor who had "fixed her up," in answer to her tearful prayers, and who would not take her paltry dollars, but

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who made her promise to come and see him often, which she did.

There are many other things Mary would never breathe to Lena, for Lena is a *good* girl.

## “OLOV HASHOLOM”

ONE morning, toward the end of Lena's first summer recess, Mischa did not rise at all. After each attempt, his shoulders, a foot or two above the cot, would outweigh the strength of his elbows and he would sink down again with a feeble “Oi.”

Lena hit the floor like a panther, with a flash of bare white arms and limbs, and reached his bedside.

“What's the matter, father?”

Nothing was the matter, except that he could n't sit up. She brought hot broth to him and bathed his head and pleaded that he call a doctor. No doctor for Mischa. He was too old to learn new tricks. He would rest awhile. Lena tended store and missed her morning practice for the first time. She was not required to practice in summer, but she could not keep her fingers from the beloved instrument. She hated vacations. She felt she was losing time.

When Mischa refused his broth at noon, Mrs. A. Levinsky was called in and she bustled and clucked and bathed in vain. The old man faded rapidly,

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without a murmur save an occasional "Oi" when his iron will failed to move his body. Lena never left his bedside, except when a customer came in. At night, she sat silent in a chair, watching her father's face, patient as ever, but how tired. The third night, she dozed in spite of herself, and when she woke at daybreak, her father was very still. She touched his forehead and cried aloud with terror. It was icy cold. She tore away the shabby bedclothes and listened for his heart and breath. Not a sound.

Palpitant fear. She was alone with a corpse. She feared to stay. She could not leave it. Then a storm of frenzied grief swept overboard her fear, and sob after sob hissed over her like waves on black, steep rocks.

A dead, bewildered calm, and she ran for Mrs. A. Levinsky, backing out the door.

THE little shop was closed, and in the rear room, twelve by sixteen, lay Mischa in a plain pine box, wrapped naked in the coarse *tachichim* (shroud), black-and-white ceremonial shawl on his shoulders. A fly walked up and down his prominent nose, which did not twitch. The lines on his patient face

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were deep and many. Even his whiskers lay perfectly still.

By the window, Lena sat shoeless, on a box, trying to blot the past days out of mind: groping desperately for some means to turn the world back as she had always known it. She gazed dully at the store, and could see no way in which it could proceed without her father. The Conservatory? It was impossible. She was alone. Alone. How strange that a girl should be alone with people walking all over Green Street. They did not know how near a corpse they were. Hours and hours of this. Always in a circle.

Crowded into the little back room the *Minyon*, ten pious Jews, sat with her, silent for the most part, now and then breaking into dismal, chanting moans. There were no flowers nor music, and the Rabbi prayed for the repose of Mischa's soul, briefly, and to the point.

The plain pine box was covered and lifted by the men, who walked bent-legged with it through the shop to a shabby wagon and slid it in. One of them, in edging by the wooden table, knocked a half-used box of Pippins to the floor. Some of them were broken.

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So M. Borofsky was buried, at his own expense.

His face did not change during the entire incident.

“*Olov hasholom.*”

FOR seven days, sat Lena shoeless on the box, and each morn and night, the *Minyon* came for prayers. On the eighth evening, the first after the period of mourning, Martin J. Mahoney walked through his ward, taking the air. Men fawned and spoke to him conspicuously, hoping the onlookers would notice it. Wops tipped their hats, but they did not fear for their choicest fruit. That goes to the cops and petty thieves. As Martin rounded the corner to Green Street, he heard a girl's wild sobs rising almost to hysteria. A second-hand shop door was open. He looked in. At first he thought it empty, but a flood of raven hair on white arms by the counter caught his eye in the twilight.

“What's the matter?” Martin's bulldog jaw shot out as he took the initiative in this, as in other matters. Lena was startled and frightened, until she looked at Martin's eyes. Martin is a man beside whom timid women sit in a street-car seat without the slightest hesitation.



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"My father's dead," she said simply, reverting to one of her sudden fits of frightful calm. Martin saw the name on the door, then the violin case on the counter, and the incident of the license flashed back to him. Isn't it strange that a man with such a memory now and then forgets a financial transaction involving large sums of money?

"Your name Lena?" he demanded.

"Yes, sir."

"Don't you worry," he said. "Ain't you got relatives? Where are they? Do they live in this ward?"

"No," said Lena. Then Mrs. A. Levinsky came in, wrung her hands and curtsied, and Martin withdrew.

He went straight to the Herricks Club, took off his coat, grabbed a toothpick, and sat at his desk. Bang went his heavy fist. In came Mike, of the loud vest.

"Send for Levine."

A JEW, looking prosperous but quite worried, was ushered in, half an hour later. Men who spent years in old Russia tremble when they are sent for. It is a habit.

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“What about Borofsky’s daughter, eh?”

They talked a half an hour, although the State primaries were close at hand and there were three newspaper-men waiting outside. Mischa’s store was doing well. It could be sold out for a couple of thousand. There was fifteen hundred in the tin tobacco boxes.

“Can the girl play scripchur, or whatever you call it?”

“She went one year by the Conservatory.”

“She ought to finish. You go ahead and fix things up, and if you need any money, let me know. Understand?”

The “understand” carried force enough to blow off a hat, and Levine dodged.

“I am not a rich man,” he demurred, “but we will see that *unser Landsleut* do not want. She shall play *scripka*.”

BOSTON newspapers, a week later, were topped with indignant headlines and scathing editorials. The Australian ballot had been debauched. The spirit and letter of the election laws had been violated. An anti-organization Republican candidate for lieutenant-governor had slipped in.

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Martin J. Mahoney's Democratic ward had suddenly turned Republican in the primary election, and almost every vote had been cast for this dark horse who so disturbed "the party" leaders and press.

It was said that by fair means and foul, in defiance of all decency, honesty, and uprightness, Martin had delivered his ward. So he had. Shame on him!



## **PART III: ERASERS**



## PART III: ERASERS

### "THOSE LEFT BEHIND"

*Dwelling-houses mourn for their dead women.*

*Walls cry out and wounds appear from rims of chairs tipped back. Pictures hang askew.*

*Gloomy thoughts form cobwebs in the corners. Heavy thoughts are dust-rolls under rugs. Grief makes brown stains on the silver, black malignant rash upon the brass. Shutters flap down limp because the joints are tired.*

*Snapping nails on frosty nights are memories.*

*Dusty wings on stifling nights are regrets, boring and eating something in the closets. Something never to be worn again.*

*Household vessels overflow with sorrow. Brown clots on the coffee-pot, sticky streaks on the molasses-jug. Hear the drip, drip of the faucet and the angry crunch of sugar under footsteps.*

*Chairs have deepest shadows and their arms reach out for something, always calling something in the dusk. . . . What starts that rocker gently moving?*

*God! How dwelling-houses mourn for dear, dead women!*

## I N D E L I B L E

THE Graydon House in Cliftondale.

I hear father tossing in his lonely room. The rusty bed-springs squeak as he rolls, side to side, back again, goading the poor old man. Now he is sobbing to himself. Sobbing in the night. All I can do is hide my head beneath the pillows or I must sob myself.

Since mother died, father has grown ten years older. His head droops as he pours water in the shaking coffee-pot and sloshes it around.

“Have some, Sam, my boy?”

Quite often, Miss Stoddard comes over in the evening to play “seven-up” with him. She calls him “Alec” and slaps the cards down like a man. Her head shakes more, late in the evening, and I know she must be sleepy, but she sticks it out till father gets drowsy and then she says “Good-night,” short, like a man. They pull the curtains down tight, since the night the Social Circle met at Mrs. Hale’s next door and old lady Tomlinson stopped on her way home to see if there was anything she could do. Father looked cross and said, “No, thank you,” and Miss Stoddard looked sweet and asked her if she cared to take a hand.



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Mrs. Tomlinson has a face just like the Queen of Clubs.

The church-women are horrified because Miss Stoddard plays cards, but father sleeps better on the nights she plays with him. Fred Eldridge comes in sometimes and smokes and talks, but Bill Milliken's wife will not let him out at night.

Every morning early, father drives to Faulkner for the papers and he plods around his carpet shop all day. But his head droops as it does when he stirs the coffee-pot and he looks ten years older than he did before mother had a shock and died.

I AM busy all the time, daytimes, at the Conservatory and with my practicing. Then I get the meals sometimes, and wash the dishes every once in a while, and I sit and smoke and talk to father in the evenings. I suppose I ought to shovel paths and clean the ashes out of the cellar and keep the place fixed up, but somehow, I never find the time.

THE first Sunday after mother was buried, father sat around until he heard the church bell. Then he arose slowly and put on his Sunday clothes. We

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walked to church without saying a word. After meeting, Reverend Babson stood in front of us and said we should bear our burdens bravely and always remember the dear departed sister had gone to her just reward, for she lived a godly life; and the women came and said how lonesome it must be and how strange the pew looked without mother, and the ones who had lost somebody within ten years or so began to snifle.

One of the women said, "Poor Ellen is all right. It is the ones left behind who have to suffer."

"Well, we've suffered all we are equal to for one morning, so let's go home," I said, mad as could be. There is nothing those old crowbaits like so well as being afflicted.

I grabbed father's arm and walked him out, and the next Sunday father said he guessed he'd go out in the barn and clean the harness. Daisy is still alive, but she is so fat and lazy that it takes her half the day to get to Melrose and back. She is getting meaner every day, like most members of the weaker sex. In the afternoon, Mrs. Gott stuck her head in, to see if we was sick, and Reverend Ezekiel Babson called next night and found father and Fred Eldridge smoking and talking politics, and

## ERASERS

he said he hoped we would not forget our duty as Christians, and father got madder than I ever saw him and said he hoped the Foolkiller would buck up also and tend to his job right.

## TECHNIQUE

WHAT would I not give to be able to sit down and play real music on the piano, but Mr. Flynn made me promise I would stick to technical stuff through another term. It is nothing but studies and exercises, day after day, and I get so tired of listening to that metronome go "Ick, Ock, Ick, Ock," that I would like to throw it away. But I am happy sometimes, when I take the scale of C and set the metronome as fast as it will go, and rip it up from one end of the keyboard to the other and back again, ten times without a single slip. I can play loud and deep and harsh and soft and quiet, and you have no idea how many ways there are to play a scale. I try to see how many different kinds of tone I can get.

The deacon thought I was stuck up because I would not play at the church concert following a bean supper, so I told them to take their church piano and welcome. I have an upright of my own that has good tone and action, and I practice ten hours a week at the Conservatory on a concert grand. I have to wear stronger glasses now and

## E R A S E R S

they make me look like Ichabod Crane's nephew, if he had one. When I tear loose from scales and exercises, you watch the keys fly.

Mr. Flynn called in a funny, black-haired man the other day and had me play a couple of Leschetitzky studies. One was legato octaves and sounded like a gang of men, four abreast, carrying railroad ties on their shoulders. The other was staccato, like tiny puffs of grease on a red-hot stove. The black-haired man was Signor Grazzoni, an Italian, and Mr. Flynn said I was going to have him for a teacher.

"I shall miss you, me boy," he said, "but you ought to go far beyond what I can do for you. You are over the hardest part of the road, but you must keep on."

I shall go to the bughouse if I don't get a chance to play something pretty soon. I study harmony and composition with another teacher, and I like it so well it makes me more impatient with technics. Playing the piano is only one tenth of what you have to learn at the Conservatory, in order to be a musician. The first chords we studied were the three I learned on the zither from Old Bill Milliken. They are called the tonic, the sub-dominant,

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and the dominant. Chords are the best part of music.

HAZEL was home over the week-end, but I don't care much for her now. She left high school to go on the vaudeville stage, and she talks about the "profesh" all the time and makes fun of my exercises. She says I ought to go out and play for money because I can give cards and spades to some of the "hicks" she runs up against on the "small time."

Damn a girl who laughs when you kiss her.

WELL, I got to wash dishes at last or we won't have any left for supper.

## VIOLIN AND PIANO

THE most beautiful girl in the world is studying violin at the Conservatory. Her name is Lena Borofsky. Lena has black eyes with long lashes and great coils of hair that love to wrap themselves around her head. Her hair looks black, but indigo lights flash through when she passes a window. Her lips are small, but so red I am afraid to see them near her sharp white teeth.

The advanced piano students and the violin students have been assigned partners to learn to play together, and Signor Grazzoni selected me to play for Lena. I shall always love him for that, although his whiskers smell garlic, his breath smells cloves, and his hair smells fleur de lis.

Lena is the best of the violin students, and the teachers all think she will be famous. She plays so fiercely that it frightens me sometimes, and then comes an adagio as if the landslide had stopped short at the shore of a mountain lake at sunrise. It makes me shiver every time she touches the G string. I know she likes to have me play with her, although we have not said much to one another

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as yet. There are phrases in music, like the subjects and predicates of sentences, only much more lovely. Often a violin phrase asks a question, and the piano answers back, and when I answer her, she turns her head a bit and smiles with her eyes.

One afternoon, I managed to do what I had tried many times before. I asked Lena if she would like to go to Nantasket with me. She blushed a little, and finally said she would. I did n't see the harbor at all, only the sunlight rippling back and forth from Lena to the water. We walked up and down the sand and watched the waves roll in. How hard the water tried to catch those twinkling little heels of hers. Then we had a supper called a "Shore Dinner" which was mostly clam shells and fish and stewed milk.

Lena is a quiet girl and never giggles, only smiles. After supper we went back to the beach and the inky water began to bob up little silver triangles as the moon rose. All of a sudden, Lena started to cry softly, and I put my arm around her and told her not to worry. She sobbed and then told me she missed her father, *olov hasholom*, who was dead. I told her about mother and the dishes and father



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crying half the night. We talked so long we almost missed the last boat.

She lives in a funny little street back of the State House with an Italian girl named Mary. When she went in, I did n't make a move to kiss her, although I like her better than any girl I ever saw. I cannot tell you what makes the difference between Lena and the Cliftondale girls unless you can tell me how you feel when you hear Grieg's music of the northern lights.

What can she see in such a homely-looking gazabo as I am?

MISS STODDARD has given me a book to read called "Ivanhoe," but I do not like it. Ivanhoe, the big fathead, after being made Queen of the May, did not marry Rebecca, the Jewess, because she was a Jew.

Some of the girls at the Conservatory hate Jews and make remarks about Lena on account of her clothes. Anybody can see that they are jealous. Lena wears a tight plaid skirt with a little slit in the side, and high heels. I love to watch her hands, which move like birds. They are white and soft, but her arm is firm, and she plays as

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if she were quite sure of herself. Her violin is a beauty, and all the artists who visit the Conservatory look at it and would like to take it away with them.

## NOT MUCH FOR LOOKS

I AM the talk of the Conservatory.

Maude Spaulding, the great violinist, gave a recital in the Conservatory Hall for the students. I asked Lena to sit with me. The afternoon before the concert, Mr. Flynn telephoned that he had tonsillitis and could not play the accompaniments. He told them that I could do it just as well. I never was so excited in my life. I practiced all afternoon, and every time there was a difficult running passage, I was thankful for my technique. After going over the programme, I knew I could play the notes all right. But the notes are not all there is to music. How about the interpretation? You think all an accompanist has to do is to follow, but where would you be when you had to answer a phrase all by yourself and make a contrast for the soloist?

Miss Spaulding was worried because Mr. Flynn could not come, and she did not like the idea of a student for an accompanist. Signor Grazzoni said he would be honored to play himself, but I guess he saw my face fall, and he added that, if Miss Spauld-

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ing would be so kind, perhaps she would try one of the numbers with me and see if I was satisfactory to her. I don't blame her because I am not much for looks. You would take me for a flute-player if you did n't know better.

Maude opened to a set of Variations by Spohr. When she played the first introductory note, she swung me right into the beat and I could n't have made a mistake if I had tried. That is a funny thing about accompanying. The worse the soloist is, the harder it is to play with them. There were little trills and shadings I had never noticed before, but when the passage came where the piano took the air and the violin played scrolls around it, I brought the tone right out and phrased it just a little more pronounced than she had done.

What do you think? She begged my pardon for being rude to me and said she did not know I was an Artist. An Artist, she said. She told me she would be perfectly satisfied with me for an accompanist.

The stage was lighted brightly and the rest of the hall was dark, so I could not see out in front, but I knew Lena was there, as I could feel her eyes. The worst part was getting on and off the stage. I

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stumbled once, and was so scared I trembled until Miss Spaulding raised her violin.

After it was over, I walked home with Lena and Mary and we did not say a single word, but Lena put her hand on my arm and pressed it as we came near her door. I catch my breath every time she touches me.

WHILE our harmony class was waiting to get started, we had an argument over the length of the term of a Congressman. I thought it was for seven years, but others said it was only four. Lena spoke right up and told us. She knows all about the government.

"It takes a foreigner to tell us all about ourselves," Pauline Blatchford said.

Lena's eyes blazed, and I thought she was going to tear that girl's throat. "I am a better American than you are," she said, and Pauline got red. Lena thinks the United States should go to war because the Lusitania was sunk.

WAR is about all we hear nowadays.

## TOLERANCE

THE Protestants and Catholics in Clifftondale are beginning to tolerate each other. Fred Eldridge made a great speech in the town hall last night, and although he said almost exactly what the Reverend Howard Talbot, D.D., got fired for, the people all clapped and cheered.

Frank Wilson's brother, Jim, got married, and some of the women said he did it just because he was afraid of the draft law being passed. Old Lady Tomlinson thinks it is for another reason, which no decent woman should let pass her lips, but they should see in a few months. Marriages in Clifftondale are not made in Heaven. Marriage of any kind is hard to explain when you see some of the old buzzards in this town.

The speech was on Patriotism. Fred said that the world looked to us for the safety of Democracy and the downfall of the ferocious Hun at our gates. The time has come to put aside our petty differences, he said. There must be no division in our midst. There must be no distinction between Americans. Religious and political barriers must be

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swept away by the tide of a common cause, so that the united hosts of freedom may march shoulder to shoulder down the straight and narrow path to victory. He said the administration should be forgotten, and nothing said about its criminal waste and extravagance and inefficiency, and its vacillating foreign policy which has made us the laughing-stock of Europe.

We must bury the hatchet till the last gun is fired.

## THE STEEL ERASER

SIGNOR GRAZZONI is heartbroken, and so are almost all the good musicians at the Conservatory. I was there when it happened.

The Signor was so excited over his Italian paper which said the Italians were being swept back on the Austrian front, that the Germans were killing the prisoners as they advanced.

"Pigs! Barbarians! Murderers! Every German is a damned dog!" he yelled, and tore his hair and waved his arms.

Then I got red as a beet, for there was old Herr Reinhardt, Lena's violin teacher, standing very still and white at the door. Tears rolled down his cheek, and he came slowly over to Signor and shook his old fist in the Italian's face.

"This iss not true. My countrymen are lied about. England has driven them to fight for their food. They bleed when they are shot as well as your people, and they are not dogs."

Signor started to wave the paper and talk presto agitato, FF, and then Mr. Flynn came in and put his hands on their shoulders.



“Don’t forget our sacred calling, old friends,” he said. I love his brogue. “Music is not a thing for nations to soil. It is beyond the greed and avarice of races. We are the prophets of the higher, universal things. We have the voice all people understand, the art which stirs the good and shames the sinful.

“God only knows what this butchering will come to, but He will punish the guilty, never fear. We have work to do, my friends. We must inspire the timid, calm the hasty, comfort the lonely, and lift up the sad. We must din the voice of Heaven constantly into the ears of these madmen, till they have to listen. Now, shake hands, my friends. I know how easy it is to be rash, for how often I think of my own poor suffering people.”

Signor Grazzoni’s Italian became *dolcissimo*, and Herr Reinhardt sat down on the piano bench and buried his face.

“They are driving my poor boy Ludwig into the bayonets and bullets somewhere in that battlefield. Poor little Ludwig.”

Then a girl came in with a letter for the Signor from the Italian Government. I felt queer the minute I saw it. He yelled as if he had been

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stabbed, and threw himself down on his knees by the window, banging his head on the sill and crying, "Luigi! Luigi!" Up went Herr Reinhardt's head and he knelt beside him, his arm around his shoulder, sobbing, too.

Mr. Flynn beckoned me and we tiptoed out, and then Mr. Flynn almost lost his temper. A band marched by.

"It is a dastardly thing to lure men to blood and poison with the purest of all things. I hate a military band," he said.

THAT night, I told Lena what had happened, and she flared up and said the Germans should be cut down, to a man. That angered me, and I asked her how about Herr Reinhardt, her teacher, and Herr Kugel, who loves her like a father. She turned white and very thoughtful, but she said, after a while, that our Country's call should be first, above everything, and that red-blooded men should set aside other things.

I knew what she meant, because I am tall for my age. It hurt me.

"All right, Lena, I will join the navy. Good-bye."

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Then what do you think happened! She burst out crying and held my coat, and said she did n't mean it, but it was too late to let her think I was a sissie. I took both her hands and kissed them and said "Good-bye."

There was a recruiting station on Bromfield Street, and I went there the first thing next morning. I did n't have the nerve to tell father. A man with clothes like an elevator man in a swell hotel asked me a lot of impertinent questions and said to the doctor in the back room,

"There's a long drink of water out here that wants to take a cruise."

"Send him in," said a voice. I knew by the sound of it that the doctor was in uniform, too.

Is n't it strange how fresh a uniform makes a man?

He took off my glasses and looked through them and then he put a card upon the wall and asked me to read it. Of course, I could n't without my glasses.

"You can't get in," he says. "The supply department is the only one where you don't need any eyesight and they are full up. Tough luck."

I don't know about that last part of it. I did n't

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know what to say to Lena, but it was past time for my lesson, so I hurried to the Conservatory and found Lena and Mr. Flynn excited as could be. They both ran down the hall to meet me and said, "You have n't enlisted?"

"No, the doctor turned me down on account of my eyesight."

"Gott sei dank," said Lena, whatever that means.

Now it is all over, I am sure I did right, and I would do it again if my Country called.

## MARY

WHY has America no music of its own? The Germans, that is, the old ones, all love music and their composers. Bach, with his patterns interlaced and woven like the smooth-washed pebbles on the shore, large ones rolling slowly and firmly, the middle ones tumbling over and around them, and tiny ones scurrying and bouncing over them all; Beethoven with his wind roaring through bent tree-tops, and the surging of angry rivers, caving and crumbling the banks and changing color with each swollen brook; Schubert, with his songs, fresh every morning; Schumann, with his moods and twilights and questions. The Russians are deep and overcome with sadness of bare, wind-swept plains, and dark, lonely forests, and a smoldering volcano of human sorrow always strong underneath — always out of reach. Italians are warm and glad as blue skies on early autumn afternoon or silver mirrors of moonlight on the poplars.

I have been studying Chopin lately. He was a Pole who lived in France; "the poet of the piano,"

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Mr. Flynn calls him. Chopin plays with tints and shades awhile before he floods the room with bursts of gorgeous colors. He is melancholy, but never gloomy. Grieg sings the sea lapping cold in icy fjords and caverns, the northern lights and dwarfs dancing in the cold morning colors.

I wonder why the soft snow clinging to the black branches in the Common, the creak of feet on hard snow, the Indian summer haze, the roaring of winter waves at Winthrop, or the old four-masted schooners coming through the fog and salt air, do not make themes as fresh and terrible as the ones from overseas.

These thoughts came to me the other afternoon, as I walked beside Lena through the Public Garden. Lena is the pride of all the teachers and they always talk of her to the visiting artists. Gabrilowitch played at Symphony Hall the other night, but he played for us at the Conservatory a while in the afternoon. I thought I had studied Beethoven's Sonata in A, but I changed my mind when he played it. He also played a piece called "Claire de Lune," by Debussy, and it left me all bewildered. There were strange, new chords that never seemed to come to rest and pale, weird light gleaming

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through. When Gabrilowitch touches a note, there is nothing to describe it, unless it is a drop of liquid gold. After his recital, he was talking to Signor Grazzoni in the hall, and I heard him say,

“Miss Spaulding said you had a promising young man here.”

“There he is,” said Signor, and he asked me to come and meet Gabrilowitch. I almost fell over my feet getting up to him, but he held out his hand, and such a hand. I bet he could tear off half the keys if he felt like it.

“How do you do, Mr. Graydon,” he said, very carefully.

It took me off my feet. I did n’t think artists like him said just plain “How do you do.” I said something, but I don’t remember what. I have a feeling, though, that it was not the thing to say under the circumstances.

Walking home with Lena, the city never looked so bright and beautiful. I am thinking more and more of beautiful things. I must be developing temperament. Lena was very quiet and had nothing to say, but I could see something was on her mind. She walked with her hand on my arm. At last she found her voice.

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“Samuel, Mary is breaking her heart.”

“What for?” I asked.

“I ought not to tell you,” she replied; and then, after a minute, she told me how Mary had been led astray and had gone into the Revere House while her mother was sick, because she did not care what happened to her. I never would have thought it of Mary. I went into the Revere House once, and the girls, most of them, had painted faces and harsh voices and drank beer and whiskey. The men were mostly drunk, and either fat with puffy eyelids, or young and fresh and noisy. I could n’t think of Mary with those men. Lena said Mary’s mother died just about the time her father, *olov hasholom*, passed away and then Mary got a respectable job and left the cafés and Lena went to room with her. Now Mary is in love with a young Italian, a barber, who is very jealous.

Mary is a Catholic, and told the priest all her sins and he forgave her, only he said he thought she ought not to marry Pietro unless she told him her past. Mary is afraid to tell him, and is very unhappy, Lena said.

I did n’t know what to say, because the past and future can’t be helped, but at last I looked at Lena



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and said, "I would n't care if you had murdered somebody."

She blushed and kept her eyes down, but she did n't take her hand from my arm and after a while she said,

"Would n't you, Samuel?"

Then I said I knew she could not do anything wrong. Lena is a good girl. Mary is a good girl, too. Any man ought to be proud to have her, and if I was her I would tell the Wop to go and chase himself. The chances are he is worse than she is.

I know I would have been a blackened sinner if I had had the nerve. Lots of times, I have felt like going out to pick up girls, but I am afraid of women because I am so homely. A homely face is the best protection the young can have, especially girls. If Mary looked like some of the girls at the Conservatory who are jealous of Lena, she would have been able to marry the best barber in Italy without thinking twice about it.

## THIRON'S MISHAP

I AM acquainted with Jacques Thiron, the great violinist, but something happened to him which made me very sorry.

Signor Grazzoni has composed a Caprice for violin, and the afternoon before the Thiron recital, he asked Jacques to play it for the first time, and he called me in to play the piano part because the Signor wanted to hear it from a little distance. It was in manuscript which is difficult to read.

Thiron plays thoughtfully and reverently, and phrases more clearly than any one I have heard. We played the Caprice and Signor Grazzoni was delighted. Thiron called me Monsieur Graydon and treated me just as if I were a great artist like him. It is only the second-raters who are stuck up, it seems to me. I could n't help thinking at the time that I was a hot-looking Monsieur. They gave me three tickets to the recital at Symphony.

It was a terrible evening. When it was over, my arms ached because I had clenched my fists all through the programme. I was shaking.

The first number was a Sonata for Violin and

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Piano, Opus 24, by Beethoven. The first movement is allegro, and it seems to mean, not pictures or stories, but the feeling of the air in spring. I think the violin part is the air and sunshine. The answer from the piano is the water running under the earth, just before the first buds break through. Thiron must have felt Lena listening, the way he played it. The adagio is the quiet of the ocean, smooth at night, blue-gray, with phosphorous patches at the end. Then came the scherzo and all the trouble. The violin and piano chase one another, like two colts running good-naturedly into the pasture, the last just whisking his tail clear of the swinging gate. In the trio, the second period is repeated twice. It leaves you on A-natural, all ready to go back to the part like the colts. Thiron forgot to repeat it, and the accompanist, instead of keeping with him, played the accompaniment right on as if the period were being repeated. This caught Thiron off his guard and confused him so he had to stop.

I never felt so sorry for any one in my life. There he was, a great artist, with Symphony Hall packed to the gallery, and everybody thinking it was his fault. He flushed and stammered and begged the audience's pardon, and started again, but his arm

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shook, and I knew all through the programme just how he felt. I had all I could do to keep from getting up and explaining what that fool accompanist had done. Often the soloist does not follow the repeat marks just as they are.

I suppose the reason was that the scherzo is a very simple and easy part to execute and so he went to sleep. We always fall down on the easy movements, especially if a hard one comes before.

At the end, for a final encore, he played the Bach-Gounod Ave Maria, and Mary, who was with us, cried and held on to her rosary and she sobbed all the way home. Why should such a lovely girl cry for a barber?

As we were going out, we passed the stage entrance and out came Thiron. I went right up to him and there were tears in my eyes. I forgot to be bashful and said that the accompanist ought to be shot. I told Thiron the audience was full of musicians and they would know better than to blame him.

"I was very careless, Monsieur Graydon," he said, white and sick. "I shall never play again."

Lena heard this, and she spoke right up and said he was an artist and must not deprive the people

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on account of an accident. He bowed and thanked her, but I never saw a man so sad.

Such a thing is worse than breaking a string every afternoon like Ysaye does.

I would give anything if I could bow the way Thiron does.

LENA, Mary, and I walked home. I don't know what is worse than a crowded street-car, after hearing good music. I tried to cheer Mary up and told her that she need n't worry if Pietro loved her. I would not tell him at all, if he is jealous, I said, because it will start his imagination going all the time. What he does not know will not hurt him, priest or no priest.

## MUSIC AND THE MAILED FIST

THE war is playing havoc with music. The Symphony Orchestra is almost busted up because the players are mostly foreigners and some have been interned. The singers cannot sing German songs, or Austrian songs, because the public will not stand for it, and there are not enough songs in English to fill the programmes. Some of the singers sing patriotic songs with more words than music, and they get a big hand, but Mr. Flynn says they ought to be ashamed of themselves. Julia Culp is not coming here again until after the war and Fritz Kreisler had to stop his pension fund for crippled musicians because the Department of Justice will not let him play.

Most of the older boys are either drafted or enlisted, and the ones who were drafted make fun of me because I cannot get into the service. After the way Kreisler and the others have been treated, I do not think so much of the war.

The Social Circle has taken up Red Cross work and now they make socks instead of quilts for the heathen. It seems to me the heathen are lucky.

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They have sense enough not to kill each other off by the wholesale. I suppose the Cannibals have to Hooverize.

Camp Devens is a busy place. It has grown up like a mushroom and the soldiers are going in and out almost every night. All the war work I can do is to play at Camp Devens, but that is no good. Lena went with me and we played a concerto and then somebody hollered for jazz. I would have busted him in the nose, war or no war, if I could have found out who it was. Since that concert, Lena has thought less of the war.

Peter Brooks has gone and joined the Canadian Army, because he was too young for the United States. His mother is back in the church and has joined the Red Cross. People are too busy now to bother about whether anybody works on Sunday or not.

Miss Stoddard is a pacifist and that gets her into no end of trouble with the other women. She says that war is wholesale murder, and that if the Christians knew their own religion, it would not be possible. She contributed a fund to get lawyers for the conscientious objectors. They call her a German sympathizer, but she has read so many books

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on Anarchy and Socialism that she can always get the last word. Half the time, they do not know what she is talking about, so they call it treason to be on the safe side. I remember she said the same things when we did not know whether we were at war with Mexico or not. The papers are nothing but war. Every day the Allies sweep ahead four or five miles and then they hold their own awhile, and the first thing you know, the Germans are almost to Paris. Mrs. Gott is one of the most patriotic women in Cliftdale. She would gladly send her son, if he was not working in the shipyards where he cannot be spared.

The people in Cliftdale thought there was a German spy in town, because they heard strange noises at night, like a wireless, near Black Ann's corner, but the scare is over now. It was an electric wire rubbing on a tree. All a spy could find out in Cliftdale would be the number of socks the Red Cross makes, but half of them are no good, so that would be misleading, even if the Huns knew it.

THE time is up and Mrs. Tomlinson was wrong about Jim Wilson's being married for immodest



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reasons. He has n't had a baby yet, nor no signs of one. The other women were wrong, too, because he enlisted in the army and now is wounded. Well, they say everything is fair in love and war.

I cannot help feeling uncomfortable because I am not wearing a uniform. Every one makes it so unpleasant for the ones who do not fight. I would have been a hero, only they did n't want heroes with glasses. Come to think of it, I hardly ever saw a hero that had glasses on. I would have been all right in the artillery where the guns are so big they are sure to hit something whether they shoot straight or not.

MY course at the Conservatory will be over in June, and I am glad, in a way, because father's carpet-cleaning business has gone to smash since the people have spent all their money for Liberty bonds. It is a bad time for a musician to get a job, for the same reason.

## EYES NOT AIMED AT

LENA has disappeared and I never want to see a piano again. I hate God if He is responsible for such things.

We were to graduate in June and the faculty had planned to have Lena play at the last recital. They had been holding her back from public appearances so that the critics and newspaper-men would have a big surprise. Of course, I was to play her accompaniment, as I have specialized in accompanying all the way through. We practiced for weeks and weeks, and Lena seemed to grow lovelier and lovelier, for the occasion.

At first she worried about her clothes. The girls keep making remarks about them, and instead of getting mad, as she did at first, she began to worry. One night she told me she felt she did not look just right and she had tried dress after dress in the stores and none of them suited her.

The idea of her not looking all right! She could look good even in one of Miss Stoddard's hats, and I told her so, but she said men did not understand such things. If she had ever seen Miss Stoddard she would have realized what I meant. It seemed

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to be up to me to do something, although girls' clothes are not my forte. Finally, I asked Mrs. Ford, the lady who believed in tolerance before the war. Mrs. Ford was nice as could be, and came to Boston to meet Lena. They spent a couple of days in the stores and bought all the things needed for the recital.

Every time I think of how Lena looked that night, I have to go out and walk the streets for miles. I hardly ever sleep without dreaming and every time I get into a crowd, I think I see her, but it never turns out to be true. Where can she be hiding?

She had her hair done by a hairdresser and it was piled and coiled until there seemed too much for her head to hold. Her dress was dark blue silk and a trifle low in the neck. Her arms and shoulders were bare and white as marble. She was too beautiful for me to look at. Even her little slippers matched.

An hour before the recital, we met in the concert hall to go over the programme. We played the Paganini "Hexentanz" and she ripped off the pizzicato at the end like a flock of lizards scurrying across dry quartz. Then came the fatal number. It was an arrangement of "Eili, Eili," a Hebrew

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lament. She put her whole soul into it, and every time she touched the G string, I knew she was thinking of her poor old father in that cold, dismal cemetery, unable to hear. I could n't stand to see her eyes wet, and at the finale, after she had laid down her violin, I took her in my arms before I knew what I was doing. She sprang right close to me and sobbed and clung and looked right into my eyes. I knew she loved me, and just as I was stooping to kiss her, there was a crash that shook echoes out of all the empty seats. Lena turned white and reeled, and as she fell back, I saw her left hand was bleeding.

The heavy top of the piano had fallen down and clipped off the ends of her fingers and there were the raw stumps. I called for help and a doctor was rushed in just as she opened her eyes. The violin was right beside her.

They held her and bathed her hand, but the doctor shook his head and said,

“Those two fingers cannot be saved. They will have to come off at the first joint.”

Everybody turned sick to their stomachs. Herr Reinhardt collapsed and Mr. Flynn turned his back to the rest and cried like a baby.

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Then the worst of all. Lena seemed to come out of the trance and she sat a minute, very still, looking at her left hand. Then she let out a cry that I will hear to my dying day, knocked the doctor out of the way, grabbed the violin and smashed it on top of the piano. Then she fainted again and they carried her to an ambulance.

I walked the streets all night, and I don't remember anything but that terrible "Eili, Eili," running backwards and forwards through my brain. The next morning, I tried to get into the hospital, but she was delirious and they would n't let me see her. I kept on walking, colliding with people and getting cursed by all the drivers and motormen, and the next thing I knew, it was three days later and I was in a hospital myself.

They could not keep me there. As soon as I woke up, I went to Lena's house, but the landlady cried and said Lena and Mary had gone, poor things, in an automobile, and nobody knew where to find them.

I have not touched a piano since. I would break that thing with an axe if I could go near enough to it. I never went back for my diploma.

What shall I do?

## SEARCH FOR A FACE

*Faces are water-drops and the city is a reservoir of faces, flowing inward from a spacious watershed.*

*Railways are rivers; angry and swollen, and the morning faces rush in, yawning, pale, and lifeless. Subterranean springs belch faces from subways and tunnels. Higher thoroughfares are canals on which well-laundered faces float with much more dignity.*

*Rushing, foaming, whirling. Eddies and swirls and vortices. Filled to overflowing.*

*Then the floodgates are set and the influx subsides. Faces are not so terrifying when there is room to breathe.*

*Noon, and criss-cross currents slosh from side to side. Intersections of great streets are whirlpools. Solemn blue faces hold up white gloves and tend the gates and locks.*

*Hidden under cold stone walls are cisterns, and therein stagnant faces chill and rot and slime on top. Prisons.*

*By rows of great trees are giant filters and a stream of twisted faces go in red and come out white. Hospitals.*

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*Dripping faces, driven in troughs, make great steel wheels go round, hour after hour, monotonously. Great wheels must turn and faces must be fed. Factories.*

*Evenings bring the level to the spillway brim, and great floodgates are opened. Muddy faces slosh and roar and crowd the outbound ditches, soaking the ground for miles.*

*Many drops are lost and sink beneath the earth and no one knows the rest of that.*

*The barren plains are irrigated with faces. Nothing grows in deserts, where no people are, except the vegetation God intended. City water makes strange growths appear, and who has time for weeding?*

*Tributaries are of many colors. Some are black and dirty, or brown and thick with silt. Some are yellow, looking poison; others sad and empty gray. But there are small rivulets of drops which are white and pure. What becomes of them? Water in the reservoir is much the same, but only surface water may be seen.*

*Faces are mixed and mingled in the giant reservoir, sometimes over, sometimes under — circling, gurgling. Only surface faces may be seen and surface faces soon go down.*

*How may a single face be found?*



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I HAVE searched everywhere. It is hopeless.

Why does she wish to hide from me?

Crowds make me dizzy, I have seen so many lately. Some evenings I spend at the North Station, sitting by the door of the ladies' room, and my neck gets cramped and the cords swell and ache from hours of watching. Every time the door swings from the street, I think, "This may be Lena;" but it never is. I know where the level of her face would be and so I keep my eyes just there. I look straight at the door. Then I hear footsteps out of the ladies' room and I have to turn my head, back and forth, back and forth. It hurts my neck and the end of my spine. Sometimes I see a face which knows me and speaks and says, "What are you looking for, Sam?" and always laughs. I dread it when I see a face I know. Some day I shall kill one. First it walks along, blank, minding its own business. Then a flicker of light goes over it and the eyes become fixed. Then the smile and the chin gets ready. . .

"What are you looking for, Sam?" Then the laugh. Some day I shall kill one.

As evening drags on, the footsteps come thinner and the doorway gets a rest sometimes, and then



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my neck and spine ache more than ever. I have to watch out for the cop. He walks up and down and I think I feel his eyes on me. I feel guilty, but I don't know why. When he passes, I keep my eyes down. People laugh, because I have to look so hard to see the doorway, I guess. I must get stronger glasses. The nigger shoveled sawdust on my feet when he was sweeping up the other night and it startled me.

WHAT is there to do? The landlady does not know a thing. She has not heard from Lena. The Conservatory is closed for the summer, but no one there would know. I cannot find out where she lived before. I forgot the street she told me at Nantasket.

Father does not understand the tragedy.

"Sam, my boy, you are out nights a good deal lately. I hope you are behaving yourself."

When I told him about the accident, he said, "It's a damn shame, but I knew a fiddler up in Milford who played tip-top with one whole finger gone."

I am ashamed to say I laughed at this. I just laughed right out and could n't stop. Think of

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laughing at my poor Lena's crushed hand, but I could n't stop. Father knows it worries me because I cannot find her.

"Son, keep your shirt on," he said. "She will write you some one of these moonlight nights."

But she never does.

WHAT makes me think such terrible things of her? Her picture on that last night is under my eyelids and what do I see when I close my eyes? White bare arms and shoulders and a rim of bright blue silk and then *It* begins, wildly, somewhere out in the night.

"Eili, Eili." And then I hear her say, "Would n't you, Samuel?" — and then I think of Mary and wonder what's become of her. And then that vile Revere House comes. I cannot shut it out. I see a coarse, half-shaven man with puffy eyelids leering in a glass of stale beer, and I see him lower at my Lena's bare white arms and shoulders and then a priest says in a maddening sing-song:

*You must tell the barber*

*Mama told me not to*

*You must tell the barber*

*Mama told me not to.*

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And pretty soon we all skip around a circle with the leering man in the center, always looking at Lena's shoulders, and all of us singing that silly song.

And then I spring up in a cold sweat and I cannot forget because I have not really been asleep.

What shall I do?

## DISAPPOINTMENT

Now I am a jailbird and the whole town knows it. I don't care for myself, but I hate to have those old hens say they are glad "poor Ellen" is not here to see her son disgraced.

Before it happened, I had n't slept for two nights, and the mixed-up things in my head made me feel queer all the time, and afraid of people. As usual, I started for Boston and walked and walked the streets. How many plaid skirts there are, with little slits along the side. I see them getting into street-cars and the door slams just before I can get on. Then I am sick, because I may have missed her. I see hats like Lena's, far ahead in the crowd and I hurry to catch them, hoping every time.

But she never is there.

Everywhere are clothes like hers. I walk through department stores where there are thousands of girls, and once I thought I saw Mary. It is hard for me to see at a long distance. I ought to have different glasses.

Toward evening, on the day I was arrested, I saw a skirt I thought might be the one, so I fol-

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lowed it. I began to sweat and shake, for when it started down Howard Street, I knew it was going to the Revere House. Sure enough, before I could get near to it, it went up the Grotto stairs. I walked by the door four times before I could get up courage to go in. Then I went into the café which was only half full. At the tables by the windows, there were girls sitting alone and in pairs, sipping drinks and glancing over at the men, who were scattered all around. The girl with the plaid skirt, thank God, was not Lena, and I got so weak that I sat down, and the first thing I knew, the waiter was at my elbow and said:

“What’ll you have?”

I did n’t know what to say, because I hate beer, and so I asked for a “Rye High” which I had heard one of the girls order. If the girls can drink it, I thought to myself, it can’t be very strong. He brought the drink and I took a sip which made me feel a little brighter, although it tasted like medicine. I was so tired, I sat there and watched the people. Every once in a while, a man would catch a girl’s eye and first the man would go out and then the girl would follow.

After a while, somebody’s foot stumbled on my

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chair, and a drunk sat down at the table opposite me. I sweat when I saw his face, because it looked just like the man in my half dream. He talked to me in a thick voice and his breath was awful. Finally, he spied the girl in the skirt like Lena's and tried to flirt with her. She looked away quick and would have nothing to do with him, but he did n't take the hint, and kept on winking and making remarks to her and to me. His face looked more and more like the man who leered at Lena and I could n't keep my eyes away from it.

He had another drink and so did I, because he insisted on treating me and made so much noise about it, I said "Yes" to keep him quiet. Then he got ugly and said:

"I'll show that stuck-up whore where she gets off." He staggered over to her table. The girl looked frightened and started to get up, but he grabbed her arm. I saw his face close to hers and something made me crazy. The next thing I knew, the waiters were holding me and the proprietor was fishing glass out of the drunk's face where my glass had hit him. Then the cops came in and took me to the corner. The patrol wagon clanged up and the drunk and I were carried away.

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At the station, the sergeant took our names and our money and put us into separate cells and I went right off to sleep.

I woke with a start and a splitting headache, and who was outside but father and a sergeant. I never felt so bad and could not think of a word to say. He looked worried and asked, "Are you hurt, Sam?" I said "No" and then he said, "Come on home."

I felt better then, because I thought I would get three months or so and have to do hard labor.

About that time, another cop came in, with the girl in the plaid skirt who was saying,

"The kid's all right. He slugged that big fat-head when he started the rough stuff with me. If you want bail, I'll dig up whatever you say and you can keep the change. I'll take care of the kid until he gets sober." Then she saw father and ducked quick so he did n't see her. I don't know where she went.

We all went to the desk and the man there looked at father and said, "For God's sake, Alec Graydon!"

"If it ain't Paddy Ryan!" said father.

Paddy, who was the desk sergeant, said he

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did n't know I was Alec Graydon's son. He thought it was a fake name. They chatted awhile, and when the sergeant started to tell about some of the scrapes they were into when they were boys, father gave him the wink to shut up.

On the way home, I told father I was sorry I had disgraced him and he said,

"Forget it, Sam. I got jugged with Paddy up in Milford years ago and I lived it down. Better let liquor alone, son. You have no head for it."

I asked him how he knew I was arrested and he said Mr. Holt was on his way to the North Station and saw them put me in the wagon.

As soon as we reached home, I went right to bed and slept all the rest of the night and half the next day. I woke sitting up straight with a great idea. Lena had lived in the North End and the school records would give me her old address.

DISAPPOINTED again. Nothing but disappointments. The schools were all closed, so I found out the teachers' names and addresses and the only one at home was an old maid named Hardwick who lives in Brookline. Miss Hardwick said she remembered Lena Borofsky, and after thinking a while



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recollected that Lena and her father used to live on Pitts Street years ago.

I had never been on Pitts Street.

After a while, I found it and went from one end to the other. It was crowded with children shouting and playing ball and dodging the teams and pushcarts and auto trucks. The alleys were full of ash-cans with flies buzzing around them, and I got splashed from a puddle by the livery stable where they had been washing down the horses.

A livery stable smells good on Pitts Street.

The people were mostly Italians and could n't understand much English. As soon as I would ask one, he would call a little kid to interpret us and he would always be polite and sorry he could n't help me. I should think that if the kids can learn English, the grown men and women could do it easily. Goodness knows, it is easier than Italian.

None of the Jews remembered Lena, but I don't think they understood what I meant. At last a cop came along and I asked him if he knew her. He had n't been on the beat long, he said, but there were a couple of swell-looking girls over at a number on Hanover Street. He saw me get red, I guess, because he said he was only joking, and then told

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me that Boris Klein, who keeps a haberdashery over on School Street knew the district better than any one else, because he was going to run for the House next year, if Martin would let him.

After a while I found the shop on School Street and Mr. Klein was there. He was a young Jew with black, curly hair and good-natured eyes and his clothes looked like a window dummy. He smiled and said he was glad to see me as soon as he found I was n't a salesman. I described Lena and said she used to live on Pitts Street.

"Do you remember her, Mr. Klein?"

"I'll say I do," he said with expression. "She was an old schoolmate of mine, and one day in the lower grades, when I made fun of her father selling rags, she gave me something to remember her by. There were scratches on my face for a couple months, 'sa fact."

"That's Lena," I said, right away, "Where did she go? Is she still on Pitts Street?" My heart was pounding and my stomach felt sick.

"No, her old man set up a second-hand store over on Green Street. You can get the number at City Hall, half a block up the street, from the records of the License Board."

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I thanked him and was just going out when he said, "Any time you want anything in the line of shirts, collars, neckties, underwear, pajamas, handkerchiefs, or haberdashery of any kind, you can't do better than here." He looked expectant.

It seemed to be a cheap trick to go out without buying anything, after taking up all of his time, so I looked over some neckties and shirts and spent nearly three dollars before I could get out.

At the City Hall, I found out there was a license to M. Borofsky at 19 Green Street which had been superseded long ago. That must have been Lena's father, but I went to that number and there were a couple of older Jews who did n't know a thing about Lena. I bought a cap, which took almost all my money, and I had to come home empty-handed, except for a lot of clothes.

I SEEM to have a little more hope now, and I must be like the man named Bruce, Miss Stoddard read about years ago, who persevered and brushed down the cobwebs as fast as the spiders could build them.

## ODD JOBS

MUSIC has come back to me and when things are hard to bear, I play and play for hours. When I improvise, the new chords of Debussy come more naturally to my ear.

One day I was sitting alone and a truck drove to the door. The driver stamped up the stairs and asked if I was Mr. Samuel Graydon, 74 Salem Street. He said he had a piano for me. Of course, I thought there was some mistake, but he showed me the slip, and just at that time, Jim, the mailman, brought a letter from the Conservatory. It said the Aldrich Prize for the most deserving piano student had been awarded unanimously to me, in spite of the fact that the wretched accident on the night of the last recital had prevented me from playing. The other students who were to compete had been consulted, the letter said, and would consent to no other arrangement.

Before I had finished reading the letter, the piano-movers had started to bring the instrument up the steps. They placed it in the parlor, asked me to sign the slip, and left me alone. What a

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beauty! It was alive. A small grand of simple design in mahogany. I opened the keyboard and tried a note. It spoke to me. I do not remember sitting down, but father came in two hours later and found me playing. As soon as I stopped, I was exhausted and went right to sleep.

Since then, I have played four or five hours a day and sometimes when I stop, I see Bill Milliken sitting in the next room, puffing away at his pipe and listening. He comes in very quietly.

Bill has signed the pledge again.

I went to the Conservatory to thank them, and they were all so kind to me, but nobody said a word about Lena. They know how I feel about it.

My diploma is being framed.

I CANNOT seem to hold a job.

First, I tried to play in a movie house, because we needed the money. The piano was an old upright with half the keys sticky, and besides that, there was a drum and cornet. With the drum banging in one ear all afternoon and evening, and the cornet bellowing into the other, I could n't hear myself play and I am thankful for that much. For the first week or so it used to make my head ache

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all the time and I lost my appetite completely. How do people listen to such stuff? I stuck it out for a couple of months, and then I had a chance to play in a theater orchestra, substituting for a man who was overseas. It was understood, of course, that I was to leave as soon as he returned. The theater job was as bad as the movie house, but I got along after a fashion as soon as I got wise that I was to pay no attention to holds and rests or the tempo or dynamic marks.

I was called down three or four times because I was looking over the audience for Lena and missed a cue.

That job lasted almost through the season, but the soldier came back in March. To tell the truth, I was as glad to see him as his mother was. While I was there, I tried to forget all the music we played and to be careful not to slip into careless ways, but if it had not been for my piano at home, I should have gone crazy.

AFTER loafing awhile, I received a letter from Signor Grazzoni saying that a friend of his, a soprano, desired an accompanist for a series of concerts. That cheered me up considerably, and after trying

out with Madame Larrano and her flute-player, I was engaged.

Why *will* men play flutes?

The only thing that troubled me was that I had to be on the road several weeks at a time and was obliged to leave father alone. I mailed my address to him every night, so that he could relay any word from Lena.

The first concert was in Portland and the flute-player had a sore throat and could n't appear. I played the flute cadenzas on the piano and Madame was delighted that things went as smoothly as they did. I could never understand why a soprano should stop a song and play "follow my leader" for five minutes with a flute. Imagine a basso profundo stopping right in the middle of something to grunt against a tuba for a while.

The next stop was Lynn, Massachusetts, and the hall was crowded. Madame received a splendid ovation and the first few numbers went well, but my luck was on the job. The piano was a concert grand, slightly out of tune, and, of course, the lid was raised halfway up. In the middle of the fourth selection, I looked up at Madame who was holding a high note and I saw her arm was thrown back,



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with her finger-tips resting on the edge of the piano.

Everything turned black with yellow spots and the high note stopped with a gurgle. I had Madame by the arm, trying to pull her away from the piano. The audience did not know what to make of it. Most of them laughed, and Madame Larrano flew at me and swore black and blue in Italian. I could n't go on for ten minutes and then I had to have the piano lid down.

That was the end of my tour and now I am out of work again.

I was unstrung for quite a while, but I have started practicing again. Bill Milliken, who is handy with tools, has put a silver screw into the post which holds up the lid of my own piano, so that it cannot fall. I always try it before I play, to see if it is firm.

I ASKED Mr. Flynn's advice about starting to teach and he advised my getting a studio in some small city away from home.

"A prophet is without honor in his own country," he said.

As soon as I get another position and save



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enough money to fit up a studio, I am going to follow his advice.

I PLAYED one of Liszt's Rhapsodies for father the other evening. He said if he had a new thousand-dollar piano, he would go easy with it. Miss Stoddard said he was fit for stratagems and plots.

"I can trim you a game of seven-up, anyway," he remarked.

IF there was anything to heredity, I would be world's champion on the Jew's-harp.

THINGS are going very badly. I have been out of work since the tour with Madame Larrano and I cannot get enough money to start teaching in another town. Bill Milliken made a sign for me:

SAMUEL GRAYDON

TEACHER OF PIANO AND HARMONY

The women will not send their children here on account of my being a jailbird. The older boys and girls will not practice and want to play nothing but

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popular songs. I have a few pupils, but they are mostly poor, so I do not charge them much. One little Armenian boy works hard and can play the scale of C without a break. He will do well.

All the jobs in theaters or movies are being given to the service men, so I am out of that. Prohibition has ruined all the cafés and the musicians who used to play for the cabarets are out of work. I seem to be too nervous for concert work, but perhaps I will outgrow it.

Horrible thoughts come to me at times. I do not know where they come from. The other night, I said to myself, "I would feel better if I knew Lena was dead." Why do such things go through my mind, when I would give my life for her?

Father is rather feeble and is despondent lately because Daisy died. As long as she was able to plod along to the carpet-cleaning shop, father would go there and work awhile every day. Now, the shop is rotting and father sits around the house or putters in the yard. He takes it very hard.

I think I should give up music and try to work at something else, but I cannot seem to get started. What can I do? My eyesight is not quite good enough for a chauffeur, arithmetic is like Greek to

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me, and my handwriting is slow but sure. The writing would do, if it were not for the blots.

FOR the last few weeks I have been dreaming almost every night and it takes away all my energy.

## ETHEL'S HAND

ONE evening as I was walking past Ethel Goodman's house, she came to the door and asked me to come in. Ethel is nearly handsome now, but she dresses severely and is head over heels in Socialism or Woman Suffrage.

"Sam," she began, "I hate to see you moping around like this. I know how hard you were hit, but you must n't lie down and quit. Buck up! You need a little female society."

She came over and straightened my necktie. I never could tie a four-in-hand.

"It would n't be fair to a girl," I said. "You know my reputation."

"Bosh!" Ethel came back. "What do I care about that! I would n't give a snap for a man who had n't sowed his wild oats."

She thinks I am a rounder, by the way she talks, and it seems to please her.

"What if you did get pinched!" she continued. "Some of the finest and most courageous men in this country are in jail right now."

I told her she was very kind, and so she was, but

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I warned her that the Social Circle would put her on the blacklist, and a girl's most precious thing is her reputation.

"Chuck it," said Ethel.

"Besides, it would be unfair in other ways. I could never love any one but Lena."

It seemed as if I must tell my troubles to some one. I sat beside Ethel and told the whole story and she was as sympathetic as could be. It did n't seem wrong to hold her hand, and after a while, I enjoyed having her knee rub against mine once in a while, although I knew she did n't mean any harm.

"Sam," she said, when I had finished, "I know just where I fit. I have learned something since I took up suffrage and I am no longer content to sit around and crochet all my life. I am lonesome half the time, but the line of talk the boys here in Clif-tondale have gives me the Willies."

"I am not exactly what you would call a Daniel Webster," I remarked.

"No, but there is something fine about you that appeals to a woman," Ethel said.

I knew it was all rot, but it made me feel quite warm and comfortable at the time.

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"You and I must be pals," she went on. "I love music and it does n't all go over my head, although I gave up playing long ago. Now you come and see me when you feel like it. If we want to go out, it'll be Dutch, because I know you are up against it and I am making good money teaching domestic science."

That made me blush, for I am very sensitive about money, but she was so in earnest and so decent, I did n't mind at all. She told me I needed exercise and we arranged to go walking Thursday night. When I looked at the clock, it was midnight, and I came within an ace of kissing her when I said "Good-night," but she looked straight up at me with her clear, blue eyes, and held out her hand, just like a pal. Her hair is golden and has a way of blowing little stray locks across my face when I stand close to her.

I never saw Ethel look so well.

THURSDAY night, it snowed, and Ethel suggested we call on Miss Stoddard, of whom she is quite fond. That suited me first-rate.

Miss Stoddard was reading a book by a Russian whose name is beyond recall and asked Ethel if she

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liked it. I think Ethel did not, for she said something about "brutal realism." Then they talked about a lot of Swedes I had never heard of, and Miss Stoddard gave me a story called "Asra" by a square-head named Strindberg. It looks kind of dry, but Miss Stoddard said it would do me good, and Ethel blushed just the least bit.

Then we talked about the Peace Conference, and Miss Stoddard said they would be at each other's throats again before the spoils were divided up. I said the fourteen points would keep the world free from war and that the United States would prevent the others from robbing the small, unprotected nations.

"Chuck it," said Ethel.

They don't seem to take much stock in the newspapers and they said the capitalists were lying about the Bolsheviki.

"Well, a woman is n't safe in Russia, at any rate," I remarked. "They are forced into free love."

"Sam was always fond of Russian fairy tales," Miss Stoddard said.

Most of the talk was over my head and it made me ashamed of myself. I have decided I will read about what is going on in the world.

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Miss Stoddard made some tea and we had animal crackers with it, just as we did years ago on Sunday afternoons. Then Ethel started me talking about music and I warmed up right away. They listened attentively to all I had to say and treated me like a prophet or something, but when I talk politics or books, they treat me like a child.

Well, you can't play every instrument in the band, but you ought, at least, to be able to arrange music for them.

We had a pleasant evening. Just like old times, and when I saw the snow on the fields and trees, as we walked back to Ethel's house, it reminded me of the "moujiks" and sleigh-bells I loved to hear about when I was a boy.

I sat with Ethel awhile and her knee rubbed mine once or twice. Toward the last, I held mine close to her, so it happened oftener. When she stood up to go to the door with me, a haircomb fell down the back of her waist. She could n't reach it, and said, "Fish it out, Sam, like a good fellow."

The warm touch of her back seemed to stay with me half the night and make me feverish.

Ethel is a good pal, and I am restless evenings when I do not see her.



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FRED ELDRIDGE got me a job in the railroad station, selling tickets, checking baggage, and building fires. It does n't pay much, because there are only two or three trains a day on the branch, since the war.

I have plenty of time to read and I take the books as Miss Stoddard recommends. I am having a hard struggle, but it comes easier every time. There is a book called "Fathers and Sons," by a Russian named "Turgenev." It is about a couple of young men, one a doctor, who go around visiting their immoral parents and a lot of nuts. One is a Nihilist, but he catches the fever and dies before anything serious happens. You might as well write a book about Clifftondale, for all the excitement there was, except for one duel. One of the fathers lived with his hired girl who had a baby. If it happened in this town, she would be fired quick, and he would have to move if he was a deacon. There must be something to all this talk about free love in Russia.

Before I read the book, I thought a Nihilist was a man who bombed the Czar or a bank, but it seems a Nihilist is a person who does n't believe a thing he hears. I am pretty close to that myself.

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Ethel is reading a book called "Poor People," by Dostoievsky. I picked it up while she was getting ready to go out the other day, and all I could make of it was a couple of foreigners writing letters to each other about the rent. I guess the high cost of living hits them in Russia as well as free love.

ANOTHER summer has passed, and I am still superintendent of the Cliftdale railroad station. Once in a while, when I get a chance to play somewhere, father spells me. Most of the people laugh at me because I am a station agent after going through the Conservatory. Jack Foley is making good money playing the fiddle with a burlesque troupe and Hazel is on one of the big circuits with the Six Musical Samsons.

Every day I practice and keep up my technique, so that I will be ready to take advantage of the first opportunity.

ETHEL and I went to Symphony to hear Sophie Braslau and it has broken me all up again. Her first encore was "Eili, Eili." We sat in the center of the middle section and I could n't get out, so I nearly suffocated. I did not sleep a wink that

night. For days afterward, I thought I saw Lena and Mary in the car windows as they passed the station. I watch every one of them.

Shall I ever be happy again?

I AM in more trouble than Don Juan and have not had one tenth of the pleasure. Molière wrote Don Juan, but I do not think much of it. The characters walk in, say what they have to say, and walk right out again. That's all there is to it.

One evening, the air was warm and there were millions of stars that shine only in late September. Ethel tapped at my window about seven o'clock and walked right in. I was playing the Chopin F minor scherzo and the music excited me. Ethel seemed very thoughtful and quiet.

We walked through a lane in the woods, where the moonlight makes brown and cream patchwork through the leaves, and sat on an old bench by the road, after walking a mile or so. We talked of music and other things, and as Ethel leaned forward, a lock of hair blew across my face. I reached for it at the same time she did, and our hands met. Her knee touched mine and I felt that tingle all through me. Her lips were close and I could feel

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her warm breath. I kissed her and crushed her in my arms and held her as tight as I could. She nestled close and was very still a moment. Then she sprung up quick and said we must keep on walking. I wanted to stay. All I could think of was to feel her straining against me.

We walked back a short distance and she got a stone in her shoe. She sat on the moss, in the back part of the Gotts' yard and I unlaced her shoe, which was a high one. When it slipped off and I felt her warm foot in my hand, I lost all my senses. We came together, arms open, and she was almost faint.

Flash came a light in our faces, and old man Gott said "What's this?" He had heard the noise and thought somebody was stealing his pumpkins.

There we were, on the ground, Ethel's hair down, one shoe off. We went away without saying a word and Ethel cried and ran straight into the house as soon as we arrived.

WHAT ever caused me to do such a thing? I could never love any one but Lena. Now the story will be all over town.

There is but one thing to do, and that is to marry

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Ethel. How can I support her? She makes more money than I do. Whenever I think about it, the blood rushes to my head and I feel that warm foot in my hand.

The next day, I received a note from Mrs. Simpson saying that she had decided it was best that her daughter, Ruth, discontinue her piano lessons. Ruth is fifteen, and one of my best pupils. They live next door to the Gotts.

I THOUGHT the only fair thing to do was to propose to Ethel and I went to her house with that intention. She answered the door and looked a trifle pale, but otherwise self-possessed. I kept her hand when she shook hands with me, and stammered something about trying to make her happy, and to my great surprise, she jerked away and said:

“Chuck it, Sam.”

I was bewildered and she told me to sit down.

“I’m going to lay all the cards on the table, Sam,” she went on. “I don’t know where you got your reputation as a bad man, but as a betrayer of maidens, you leave much to be desired.

“Now, get this straight. I love you, Sam, and I have been hoping all the while you would forget

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that lady of the raven tresses and take a blonde for better or for worse. There was n't any stone in my shoe last night, and I have been wearing haircombs loose for six months.

“Any time after next January that you take a notion to marry me, I'll come in my kimono to save time, but I'm not going to have you talked into it by these Bible-thumpers all around us, and, furthermore, I'm not going to trap you into it with a neat little instep or a loose shirt-waist.

“Now, for God's sake, play something.”

## AFTERGLOWS

*Crackling flames in an open grate, leaping to devour —*

*Tang of pine smoke whets their savagery.*

*Fagots shrink and crumble,*

*Fagots disappear.*

*Then the still, tense afterglow, breathing, shimmering, dying.*

*Nothing of the flame's rapacity.*

*Warm hearth pulses deepest for a while before it chills.*

*Flaming rays of the setting sun, darting to consume.*

*Agonies of mist shapes whet their thirst.*

*Soft clouds writhe and shrivel,*

*Weak clouds disappear.*

*Then the deep, pure afterglow, dimming, promising, comforting.*

*Nothing of the sun's rapacity.*

*Evening shows most beauteous, just before it fades.*

## I N D E L I B L E

*Blood red leaves in an autumn wood, dare the fatal  
frost.*

*Cries of fleeing birds inflame their insolence.*

*Branches brush and shake and sway,*

*First leaves spiral earthward.*

*Then the softer tints appear, soothing, changing,  
blending.*

*Nothing of the fool's audacity.*

*Autumn robes most peacefully, just before she  
dies.*



## THE WIND CHANGES

THE Cliftondale railroad station is not the worst place in the world, if you have eyes to see things. I have just been fitted with double lens glasses, so I can see at a distance through the top, and am able to read when I look down. What a lot of sights I have been missing!

In front of the window are the woods' changing colors. Ruddy oaks, solemn pines, and yellow flash of birches. Each tree has its own way to live. Each tree has its own way to die.

How many things there are to think about!

Some day, it seems to me, there will be a wedding of sounds and colors. How much alike they are! What could crimson be but the sharp edge of a blare of brass? What could thunder mean but glossy blue? Have you never heard soft horns and wood-winds at sunset? Is there no affinity between a moth's wing and the dusted tone of a viola? What has dusk to do with contralto? Do you jest when you hear the G string of a violin? There are many partners. Weird starlight and the oboe, dominos and saxophones, mischief and staccato.

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Have you never heard a bassoon laugh? Are you shocked when a trumpet swears? My thoughts will not be still.

On the other side is the great salt marsh, worm-eaten by tortuous creeks and rivers. Water birds in terror. Very few. Sports in brand-new hunting togs, banging at the air. Too many.

I wonder if there's one whole bird apiece.

What can a grown man see in such a game? Cold feet, scratched hands, fat stomachs wobbling; breath short, legs weak, rubber boots sloshing.

Down in the sand is a forlorn little bird standing on one leg, thinking. It weighs two ounces.

Flat, belly-down in the grass. Eye squints, finger shakes. Bang! Gun kicks, shoulder aches, eyes peer.<sup>3</sup>

Down in the sand is a torn little bird, lying on one side, gasping. It weighs an ounce and a half.

Some say 't is fairer to let him fly a foot or two. Queer creatures, sportsmen.

I ALWAYS make fun of people silently, so as not to hurt their feelings. Some day I am going to tell some of the folks who poke fun at me and call me "Superintendent" and "Paderewski," all the

## ERASERS

thoughts which have come to me concerning them, while I have sat in this one-horse railroad station.

Well, here comes the afternoon train.

STRANGE, flashing faces in car windows. How I hope Lena will be there! But she never is. Why does she not write to me, if she is safe and alive? I cannot believe she would leave me this way. What did her sorrow drive her to? She would stop at nothing in a rage.

There goes Ethel in her tailored suit. How briskly she walks! How her golden hair flutters contemptuously at the folks who stare at her! She is not afraid of life.

Maybe that's the answer. Take what comes and plough ahead. How can Lena overcome her cruel handicap? Beethoven composed his loftiest after he was robbed of his hearing, but to play the violin without fingers. All the gameness in the world could never get the best of that.

Well, I have decided if I do not hear from her this year, I will marry Ethel, and lucky I will be for such a girl to have me.

As I was turning these things over in my mind, I

## I N D E L I B L E

saw father coming down the road, in a hurry, with something in his hand.

“A letter for you, Sam. It looks important. Postmarked ‘Paris.’”

My heart jumped and stopped and my hand shook so I could hardly get it open. The feeling of it seemed to say my luck had changed.

MONSIEUR SAMUEL GRAYDON

Clifftondale, Mass.

MY DEAR M. GRAYDON:

I have obtained your address from our mutual friends at the Conservatory and take the liberty of addressing you.

In a week, I sail for America and have been booked, as you call it, for an extensive concert tour, together with Madame Alice Petersen. The Bureau has asked me to select my accompanist and make the preliminary arrangements. Remembering your excellent work when last we met, and the high regard with which you are held by the faculty of the Conservatory, I am writing to enquire if you would care to accompany me.

I am sure, in case you accept, that the matter of remuneration may be easily settled. We need not talk of this.

Address me, care of the Welkmann Bureau, at New York.

I am looking forward to your acceptance and hope you are not otherwise engaged for the season.

J. THIRON

## [ E R A S E R S

THIRON! I slapped father on the back and read it to him, laughing aloud when I came to that part about being "otherwise engaged." If Jacques could have seen me shoveling coal into that pot-bellied old stove when he wrote it, he would have left that out.

I shall have to polish up that dress-suit of mine. I may not be much for looks, but he won't catch me asleep on "repeat" marks.

"I wonder if that Frenchman can play the Sailor's Hornpipe like old four-fingered Joe Plaisted used to, up in Milford," father said.

Ethel said, "You had it coming, Sam."

WHEN a cloud turns its silver lining to earth, I wonder if the dark side shows ugly to heaven.



## **PART IV: ERASERS**





## PART IV: ERASERS

### THE REVERE HOUSE

LENA fought like a demon. Nurses and attendants were tossed and kicked and bitten and not until the surgeon reluctantly applied the merciful needle could she be quieted. Doctors called a hurried consultation. There were four who looked gravely at the bleeding fingers and three shook their heads brusquely, professionally. The fourth, an older man, shook his head sadly.

“But she is a violinist,” he said, almost in tears. “Why could she not have crushed a leg?”

There was but one thing to do. Lena was wheeled, half stupefied, to the operating-room. The ether cone was applied and she plunged through roaring space to a land of quiet, for a time. The ends of two slender fingers were amputated from the hands of an artist.

SHE recovered consciousness and looked dumbly about. The watching nurse scented trouble and called the head nurse. Up sat Lena, staring at the

## INDELIBLE

bandaged hand, and a cry rang through the ward that haunted suffering ears for days and nights. Deathly sick from the ether, she fought feebly. Morning came. She strengthened, and by noon they could hold her no longer. The doctor gave in, late in the afternoon, and Lena departed in a blue silk dress with slippers to match.

In the room at Joy Street she found Mary, prostrate with grief. Mary had watched by the dim window all night long and had learned the awful truth from the Conservatory in the morning.

Lena said not a word. She tore off the blue silk dress roughly and threw it aside. She kicked off the slippers to match. From the closet she selected her plaid skirt with the little slit in the side, and a thin, flimsy waist. Silent as death, she dressed again.

Mary's eyes grew wide with fright. "Where are you going?" she cried.

"I'm going away for good," said Lena.

Mary wept piteously and begged her to lie down and rest. Lena continued dressing, laboriously, wincing with pain from her bandaged, throbbing hand, pale from the fumes of ether. The high-heeled shoes slipped on. Lena started for the

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door. Mary clasped her waist, sobbing, entreating, frightened out of her mind. She fell to the floor, clasping Lena's knees, and swooned as Lena pushed herself clear.

Out into the June evening went Lena.

IN front of the old Revere House was a bubbling watering-trough. At the close of a long, weary day in the shafts of a rickety wagon plodded an old horse which had no name. Sad Eyes will do.

Sad Eyes was a Jewish horse, with a large, odd-shaped head and a bulging proboscis. His broad, limp ears flapped in jerky rhythm as he walked. His knees were prominent and his gait eccentric. His worn-down hoofs turned out in the orthodox Jewish walk. Like a huge, black bird, motionless on the seat, sat a Sheenie with a broad, flat derby, flapping coat, and straggling whiskers.

Sad Eyes' limp ears stood almost erect as he spied the bubbling watering-trough. In this instance, he took the initiative and stopped to quench his thirst.

APPROACHING the Revere House from the opposite direction a raven-haired girl, with chalk-white face

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and bitter, black thoughts and a bandaged hand, walked without feeling the ground at her feet, relentlessly. On she came, her face more white, her thoughts more black, rage throttling reason, temper lashing her with barbed thongs.

By the watering-trough she glanced up and a stifled cry escaped. A face looked gravely up at her. A horse's face with great reproachful eyes and patient, limp ears and a bulging proboscis. For a moment they stood face to face, motionless.

Then the black grotesque on the wagon seat took up a worn stick. One whack, and Sad Eyes turned. Two whacks, and he gave three stiff-legged hops and trotted jerkily away, leaving a raven-haired statue rooted to the spot.

TEARS broke out in a deluge, but the passers-by paid little heed. It was not uncommon to see girls crying near the old Revere House.

FIVE minutes later, Lena opened the door and took the sobbing Mary in her arms. They clung and sobbed the long night through with different sorts of prayers.

## SINS OF THE FATHERS

IN the concert hall of the Conservatory, on the night of the ill-fated recital, sat Jacob Levine, the prosperous Jew, eagerly awaiting the appearance of his old friend's daughter, Lena. Jacob had done well and multiplied his talents in a way which should win the highest approbation from the Powers that Be when the chips are cashed in at the Bank of Judgment. No longer does Jacob reside in the drab North End. He has a swell place in Roxbury and a touring-car and sits in at directors' meetings.

On one side was his faithful, fat Rebecca, resplendent in diamond ear-rings, jeweled fingers, and a hundred-dollar gown with a button missing in the back. To his left sat a healthy, tanned young man in a uniform with a proud YD on the sleeve and three service stripes.

As Lena has waxed beautiful and approached the completion of her course, Jacob has formulated hopeful plans concerning that young man and the raven-haired maiden. It would be nice to hear the

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fiddle now and then, if the children did not keep her busy.

The group just mentioned did not sense the strained atmosphere. Student after student struggled through their parts, half-heartedly. The audience could not see faint bloodstains on the lid of the piano. The end dragged on and Jacob looked worried. What had happened? He made loud inquiries out back and learned the truth to his dismay.

He drove to the ominous hospital, clucking at moans from Rebecca and "S.O.L.'s" from the veteran son. They did not gain admittance. He called the next day and received perfunctory news. On the morning following, he found that Lena had departed and he threw business to the winds. Before a Joy Street house, his touring-car, off-color but expensive, rolled up. His face was symbolic of lament.

LENA and Mary are aroused by a knock and open to Jacob. His head rocks with heartfelt sympathy, his tongue clucks in the same old way.

Poor Leijinke! She must come to live with him and his Rebecca. Lena does not know what to do.

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She is in a dazed reaction. She cannot leave Mary and she will not, of that she is sure.

Jacob has an open heart and home. Mary, of course, shall come too. What can two old folks with a young rascal of a son do with such a big house? There is plenty room. They will be so comfortable. Leijinke must rest.

The sobbing Italian girl consents to anything that will not separate her from Lena. The factory where she works is not too far from Roxbury. A hasty gathering of their scant belongings, a quick farewell to the regretful landlady, and they roll away.

THOUGHTS of Samuel crowd the long, sad day. Lena is mothered and nursed and petted by the fat Rebecca, quite at ease in a loose wrapper.

The young man, Joseph, is overjoyed with the arrangement. He has an eye for beauty. He is shyly attentive.

THAT night, the old folks linger long together after supper and begin to plot at once. Of course, Lena has no money, but is she not a good girl? Is she not the handsomest of their people? Will they not make a couple for sore eyes?



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FOR a few days, Lena does not leave her bed. She is stunned. Gradually she regains her strength, and her dominant energy asserts itself. Jacob and Rebecca see no reason for delay.

Then the storm. A conversation replete with rather broad, well-meaning hints.

"I do not want to marry."

Clucks of consternation. What girl does not want a fine home and children to bring up? There is a half an hour of reasoning. At last the truth came out. Lena's eyes blazed.

"I love some one else."

Deep disappointment marks the faces of the old folks. Timid questioning. Who is the man? What is his name? Is he a good honest feller?

"His name is Samuel Graydon."

Samuel sounded good, but Graydon? What was his father's name in the old country?

Then the bombshell. "He is an American, a Christian."

All the sad syllables of a language made for woe. Did she not know the laws of the Mashtotem? Had the thing gone too far? Tell her poor old Aunt Rebecca.

The full significance, Lena had never faced be-



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fore, in the rapture of her music. She indignantly set them right on the extent to which "the thing had gone." She did not care for laws or for anything at all. She wanted to die.

Then the wails of "Her poor father, *olov hasholom*." That she should come to this. Had she no thought for her dear papa's memory? A *goy*, she should marry. *Oi vay*.

LENA burst from them and buried her face in the pillows of her room. Her head ached and throbbed and her injured fingers twinged. Her father. She had not thought of that. All around her head sped vicious circles of misery. The Levines had played their trump card well. Her patient father's face before her seemed to leave no loophole. She must give up Samuel.

The rabbi, who had been called hastily, came to her and reasoned with her. He intoned the iron-clad laws which had survived years of persecution and suffering. He told of her duty to her father and her people. Should Mischa Borofsky's daughter be an outcast? No response from Lena, and he left her alone.

After hours, she penned a tearful letter, her

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father's stolid face before her, her heart empty and void.

DEAR SAMUEL,

My heart is broken. My career is gone. I cannot love you because of the faith of my father. The laws forbid it and I cannot bring shame to his name. He lived only for me and my violin. He saved and planned for me to have my wish and broke down working for me. That is all over. I shall never be happy again, but I must respect his memory, now he is not here.

Good-bye, Samuel, I know you will be famous. Do not look for me. Forget Lena, but remember I shall always think of you and shall never marry.

Good-bye

LENA

The tear-stained letter was sealed with sobs and placed with others on the table and Lena went back to her grief and her pillows.

She never knew that she addressed the envelope "Boston," instead of "Clifftondale."

Every time the mailman came, during her weeks of convalescence, Lena's heart rose to her white throat, but there was never an answer. How could there be, she thought? — she did not tell him where she was, but she half expected it and she saddened as the weeks passed by.

What did Samuel think of her?

## WELL MEANT

THERE was that about Lena which warned young Joseph Levine to proceed with caution. He was nobody's fool, along practical lines, and showed a trace of clumsy, masculine tact at times. Expressions of his parents' hope and desire, in the presence of Lena, he discouraged and subdued. Hints and obvious jokes were met with a prompt, "Aw, have a heart," and a similar forceful request for desistance. Outside of business hours, his mind dwelt quite steadily upon Lena. He made no advances, but his heart was hers.

If he ventured to invite Lena to the theater, he asked Mary to go also. If the old folks contrived to leave them alone, he choked his desires and begged her pardon for being obliged to keep an engagement elsewhere, the elsewhere being Franklin Park. But the girl's beauty and the tragedy in her heavy eyes haunted him and chilled his interest in other eligible maidens. He had a single-track mind.

In his father's office he grew in knowledge and importance. He had the solid Jewish traits of the old school and the energy and over-confidence bred

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by a generation of comparative freedom and political equality. He was the apple of his father's eye. More and more he took on his young shoulders, but Rebecca grew more concerned with each departing day about his matrimonial future, and she listened every night until he was safe in his room.

It was Joseph who interceded in Lena's behalf when she insisted that she go to work. Of course, a girl wanted to be doing something.

So Lena was installed as cash register girl in one of the Levine stores.

Mary waited with feelings of fear and anticipation for the return of Pietro from France, but he was of the unfortunates who were sent to the Army of Occupation and his letters were few and laborious. Her savings grew a trifle, because the Levines would not let her pay her board. Was she not Lena's best friend? Mary learned to love the old folks and even mastered pinochle, to help Jacob while away the evenings.

ONE day, as Joseph was passing through the reception room of the Young Men's Christian Association, after an hour in the gymnasium, he heard weird noises emanating from what looked to be a

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player piano. A whining violin played a melody with comical exactness of tempo and evenness of tone, to the accompaniment of the piano mechanism. Joseph stood before the instrument, and inside the glass front he spied a captive violin, screwed into place, with a band of horsehair skipping uncannily from string to string. His face glowed with the radiance of a big idea.

He made inquiries about it. Would it play any tune at all? Sure, if you bought rolls enough. Where could such wonders be obtained? The secretary gave him a New York address and whatever information was at hand.

Joseph was excited. He concocted a business trip to New York, in the midst of a rush season. At last his chance had come to make a hit. He found the vendor of the mechanical violins and pianos and selected the most expensive model. Immediate delivery was arranged for.

There were days of mystery at the Levine home. Mama and papa knew that a surprise for Lena was in the wind, and they tiptoed around mischievously. Mary was not in the secret.

A huge packing-box arrived in Boston and Joseph was notified. He left the office and personally

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superintended the moving of it into the house. The boards were stripped away, and in the corner of the spacious living-room the new instrument was installed. Rebecca dusted and admired it and hummed to herself all afternoon. Before the hour for Lena's arrival, Jacob, Rebecca, and Joseph gathered happily in the living-room, chairs placed directly in front. They waited, glowing with the thoughts of pleasure in store for Leijinke. The front door opened, little heels clicked on the hardwood floor. She arrived with polite greeting.

Joseph beamed. He had a little surprise for her. Just look. Jacob pressed a button, according to minute instructions, and a plaintive wail following the general melodic structure of "Over There" came from the bright rosewood piano.

"Now you shall have music any time," said Joseph.

Lena's face lost every trace of color. She stood terribly still, the wailing of the captive violin sounding thinner and emptier because of the breathless silence of them all. She saw the hopeful, well-meant, stupid faces, and tried with all her might to play up, but she reeled and caught the table edge and staggered to her room without a word.

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The beaming faces turned to woe. Cold sweat stood on Joseph's brow. The enormity of his error struck him like a cold shower and a lump rose in his throat.

There was no joy in the Levine household that night and the mechanical thing was wheeled to an unused room, there to remain for all time. With it went Joseph's hopes.

DURING the months which passed, Lena never came to the house without feeling a sense of depression when she found no mail. She lost weight, crowding desperately any thoughts of Samuel from her mind. Her eyes lost their brilliancy, little by little. The fire burned lower and smoldered, leaving charred, hopeless orbs fringed sadly on pale cheeks. All day she made change, mechanically, looking hostilely at every male customer before he had a chance to make a move. Evenings, she sat in her room, or walked with Mary.

But there was no escape from music. It came through open windows, at the restaurant, the theater, on the street. Music with the inside charred and smoking like a gutted building, swept by flames of all but gaunt, bleak walls.



## I N D E L I B L E

Joseph learned his lesson thoroughly, and, one evening, after Lena had quietly slipped away upon hearing a violin record on the new phonograph, he stole downstairs after the old folks had retired, weeded out all the records which seemed to include that cursed instrument, smashed two dozen disks, at five dollars each, and threw them in the ash-can. Then he returned sadly to bed. He would have cut off both vigorous, husky arms close to the shoulder to replace two little finger-ends. The largest sacrifice of which he was capable, he made unsparingly. He stayed away from Lena. He found excuses, not to linger, but to go. Nevertheless, he followed the girls at a distance in the dark, when they took evening walks, to see that no harm came to them. He felt his sorrow deeply and honestly. His nature was not one to rage and rebel, but he spent dark hours wondering what the difference was between people such as Lena and people like himself. Why should a fiddle matter so? He gave it up, with the piteous reservations yearning human hearts will cling to.



## LIKE A DAUGHTER

WINTER and summer made their drafts from Lena's eyes and did not lift the gloom.

One September evening, Jacob said to Mary:

"Mary, Liebchen, my partner's son, Max Bloom, is coming to-night to play pinochle. We got to pay attention good because he has been playing for a year with those New York sharks." He pinched her cheek. It did not take much to bring a flush to the surface.

In came Max, and as he was introduced to Mary, a shadow of surprise passed over his face. Mary noticed it, and looked again more closely, then all the joy fled from her, leaving her deathly sick. They had met before in those frightful days she tried so hard to forget.

The game was a failure. Mary could not read the cards. She muddled and blundered to the consternation of Jacob. Max played like a booby and, after a short time, the game broke up and he went home. Mary threw herself across the bed, face down, fully dressed and moaned and moaned. It was Lena's turn to play the comforter, but

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the stricken girl was too sick to tell her of the trouble.

NEXT afternoon, Max called on Jacob with a shame-faced, guilty look. He inquired about Mary and Lena. How did they happen to live there? What did he know about them?

Jacob burst into extravagant praise. Such good girls. Just like daughters. He told then of Lena's disappointment, as he saw it, and the incidents that followed.

"What's the matter, Max? You don't look good."

"Nothing, Jake, only I think I ought to tell you something."

"What is it?"

"Well, y'know, times have changed since you was a young feller and a boy now has got to sow a little oats, y'understand."

Jacob's head wagged regretfully but sympathetically.

"If I am not mistaken, Jake, Mary used to be a sport. For money, y'know. I used to see her at the old Revere House."

A storm of indignant protest from Jacob. His

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excitement broke into harsh Yiddish. In his unaccustomed violence, he almost threw Max out of the office. His little Mary a sport! Max is mistaken. He must not say such things. He cannot insult a girl who is just like a daughter. He ought to be ashamed of himself.

“I did n’t mean no harm, Jake. Maybe she’s respectable now, but on account of Rebecca and Lena, I thought I ought to say something. It’s all right for girls to reform, y’know, but a man must be particular about his own house. He’s got a wife and children to think of.”

Jacob’s afternoon was spoiled. He didn’t believe it, but Max’s evident sincerity could not be disregarded. How could Jacob ask a girl such a thing? His little Mary. He started home slowly. Mary was there, unable to work that day. Rebecca was busy with dinner. All the cooks and servants in the city could not keep Rebecca out of the kitchen. Jacob’s face was a picture of abject misery. He knocked on Mary’s door. She opened, tearful. They made a sorry tableau.

He stammered, “Mary, Liebchen, I was talking to Max—” That was enough. White crept under the olive cheeks. She bowed her head. “I knew it

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was no use," she said, and flung herself with a crash to the floor. Rebecca heard the noise and came waddling in. Jacob's face alarmed her. What was the trouble? Had Mary fainted? Call the doctor, quick. Then Jacob hastily explained, and Rebecca swayed and shook with horror at the mention of what she vaguely had been made aware of by the Old Testament. They rocked in despair. Lena's friend! How could she do such a thing! Of course, she would have to go. Joseph was just that age. There would be trouble.

In the meantime two more figures had come upon the scene. A cry from Lena as she ran to Mary. Joseph stood still in the doorway. All of a sudden, Lena sprang erect, all the old fire blazing in her face. Fierce, furious, utterly out of control. "So Mary must go! Very well, we will both go! Now! At once! Do you hear? Joseph call a taxi! Who said Mary was not good enough for anybody?"

Joseph tried to remonstrate, *once*. The old folks clung together and sobbed. Suitcases were packed. Out the girls went, Joseph carrying the baggage, tears in his eyes, Lena supporting the half-fainting Mary.

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A FURNISHED room was found behind the State House. The girls said "Good-bye" to Joe, who fingered his hat, helplessly and miserably, feeling all the blame. Max had told him in the morning. Before the drab door closed, he sought for words:

"Mary," he said awkwardly, "don't hold this against me. I did n't say a word. I don't think nothing wrong about you. Let me be like a brother. The old people don't know no better."

AND the pity of it is, they don't.

## THE APPARITION

THE old Joy Street atmosphere stirred memories in Lena she had fought for months with all her will. Things did not seem the same. Creeds and laws seemed far away. Nights she lay wide-eyed and the thoughts of Samuel filled the room. Love, for her, had developed subconsciously, flashing in one brief moment and blasted into chaos by the nightmare following.

Now she felt as if the dark was full of suffering, not her own. She knew a heart was aching and seared. She worried about Samuel. What had become of him? Had his music fled from him? Were snatches of harmony following him, mocking him, lurking in corners to prey upon him if he slipped and fell?

Lena got a job in the factory with Mary, wrapping tissue paper around tin cans. Wrapping, pasting, wrapping, pasting. Piece-work. Ten, fifty, a hundred. Endless rows of cans, endless rolls of tissue, endless smelling pots of paste. A half-hour, an hour, wrapping, pasting. Ten, twenty, fifty, hundred. Half the morning gone.

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Her fingers detached themselves from her brain. She was not conscious of the movement of her arms. Every day dragged. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, wrapping, pasting, wrapping. Ten, twenty, fifty. Half the week has gone.

Sunday was the worst of all. Where can two unescorted girls go unmolested?

All day long, her mind was working in a vicious circle, around, around, a dismal circle, and the suffering of Samuel found her there.

A FRIDAY night, she tossed and turned and memories pressed her weakening resistance. At last a resolution formed. Surely it would do no harm to see him. Just to know that he was safe. She would go to Cliftdale after dark and find his house. Perhaps she would hear him play. This startled her. She *wanted* to hear him play. Music from him, she could bear. She would go to Cliftdale. He need never know she was there.

Saturday morning dragged on. Ten, twenty, fifty. Wrapping, pasting, and her blood rushing with excitement. She would go that very evening.

After lunch, she went alone to the North Station,

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avoiding Green Street, her heart pounding. She sought the train schedule on the wall of the waiting room. A train to Cliftdale at 7.20. She would take it. All afternoon she walked the streets. The clocks dragged. What frightful things are hours in which the world stands still. At last the train backed in clumsily, bumping the posts at the end of the track. She was the first to enter, the top of her head prickling, hands clasping and unclasping impatiently.

The ridiculous train started, and after jerks and bumps like a dog with a heavy sled, it came to groaning rest in the wailing back yards of East Somerville. Clank, hop, a slide, and a stop by a neglected cemetery. Lena's nervousness grew almost to fright. Never had she been in such a state. She sat, half dazed, wishing she could get out, legs lacking strength to do so.

"Cliftdale!" — a harsh conductor in her ear. She jumped. Her heart stopped. She was rooted to the seat. The stop lengthened. It seemed an hour. At last she rose, supporting herself on the moth-eaten seats. She dragged herself to the dim doorway and fifty feet ahead she saw an apparition.

SAMUEL, shabby, in overalls and an old gray



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shirt, peering into the baggage-car, a station agent's cap on the back of his head, lifting out a trunk.

"All aboard!" Jerk! The train started. She collapsed to the rear seat, limp and helpless.

Samuel a station agent, lifting trunks, peering into cars with his sad-looking glasses! Fingers pointed at her from the dismal corners of the jerky train. She was to blame. Strains of music floated back to her. Looks of understanding, when they had agreed perfectly on the interpretation of a delicate phrase at the first reading, flashed through her mind. She had pictured him at the piano, in evening clothes, perhaps, playing with his naïve sincerity.

"All out!" The end of the line. She found herself in Lynn, sick, weak, demoralized. Her thoughts, which had shifted from her own misfortune, attacked her far more bitterly from a new direction.

She sat in the station and gathered strength. Weakly, she proceeded to the bulletin. No more trains. What should she do? She asked a gruff policeman, and was directed to the trolley cars. Half an hour she waited, fearing she was in the wrong place, but at last a car marked Boston with

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sick electric lights. An hour and a half she bumped and jarred on uneven rails, and from the dark, accusing fingers, and the sight of a shabby station agent, cap on the back of his head, peered in, searching for some one.

She thought of his hands. Great, strong hands with capable, lithe fingers, terrible in fortissimo, light as swallows' wings in the whispered passages.

She arrived at Scollay Square and walked homeward, trembling. Mary was wild. Where had she been? Why did she not tell her she would be away? The Italian girl's hysteria faded as she saw Lena's face. Their arms encircled one another, and Lena sobbed her story. Her first real burst of confidence.

The night was spent in tears and different sorts of prayers, but Mary saw a gleam of light. A spark of love.

## LIGHT

MONDAY passed, wrapping, thinking, pasting. Shame had come to Lena. Her shattered violin rebuked her. Why had her rage added to her torment? At least, she might have plucked the strings. Samuel's face, crowned by a station agent's cap, was constantly before her.

Tuesday, and another face came to her, a kind, old German who had loved her as a father. Tuesday! Why, Tuesday was the night the quartette gathered in the alley of old-timers. She would go. She would go and beg forgiveness. They would understand.

Night came at last. As Lena approached the shop of Kugel, she heard sounds like a great organ of violins and deeper strings. Chords, each separate note of which throbbed and vibrated from the direct touch of aged fingers. Angels fluttered o'er the small square patch of sky that domes the alley of old-timers.

Adagio, Sonata Pathétique.

Hope. Not the glimmering, senseless mirage, half disbelieved within, but the firm, uplifting

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hope which rests on solid faith in the Great Goodness somewhere.

The violin, throbbing above the rest, led the heavenly song. The 'cello sustained, with a counter melody, on strong and willing shoulders. Between them the viola and second violin played the parts of the humble and meek.

The fervent opening, at the third measure, soared upward toward the infinite, and Lena's spirit soared apace. Out of the world of mangled bodies, out of the wreck of cherished hopes, up and up, shedding the shackles of bitterness, sailing serene at the close, where nothing of earth could approach it.

Yes, it was Beethoven; who else sends angels to lift up the courage of despairing girls?

Silence within.

Lena entered the shop and Herr Kugel looked up. He wiped his spectacles, he staggered to his feet, and as his arms opened, a wealth of raven hair flung close to Adolph's silver white, sobbing.

The others did not move. They felt the presence of something holy. After a silent moment, Adolph stepped back, raised his eyes to the sky, and his bow swept the strings.

## ERASERS

“Be Thou, O God, Exalted High!”

Instant sprang the other bows to place and the *Te Deum* sounded forth exultantly. If that burst of frenzied gratitude never reached its mark, burn the churches and cathedrals, smash the gilded organs, melt the silver platters, tear the black and solemn gowns.

WHO knows the meaning of white light, after months of self-imprisoned darkness? Lena sat on the floor by Herr Kugel's chair, head resting on his knee. Hours they played, all their favorites, but after the *Te Deum*, nothing sad or solemn. It was a gala night. Rollicking minuets of Haydn, delicate minuets of Mozart, an arrangement of the Schumann “Grillen,” that whimsical composer's conception of the sensations of man with a flea. “Now you feel it, now you don't.”

At parting, Adolph said, “I never blamed you, Liebchen; why did you stay away? You will never forsake us again?”

Lena nodded and dried her eyes.

“Years ago, it was the little girl I lost. Did you think I cared more for the violin than for you? There are greater workmen than I to make violins.”

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NEXT morning, Lena welcomed the sun, alive, triumphant. An announcement in the morning paper caught her eye.

Jacques Thiron, after a two years' absence, will open an extensive tour of the United States by a recital in Boston, at Symphony Hall, Sunday, October 8. He is well known to music-lovers of this city as a faithful interpreter of the classics who plays sincerely and with authority. Thiron never permits his performance to degenerate to a mere display of virtuosity. His superb technique is the means to an end. He will be more than welcome.

The programme has not yet been announced.

Lena reveled in her joy at the shifting of music from a torment to a God-send. That very day, she purchased tickets for herself and Mary and wrapped tin cans in tissue paper through the hours of the week, tingling with rapturous anticipation.

## MUSIC

*Music is not all for those who laugh. It draws the poisoned fangs of grief and misery. It sings the song of higher, universal things. Its voice is one which all may understand.*

*Let the timid come for inspiration.*

*Let the hasty come for calm.*

*Let the heavy-hearted bare their breast to it. Music has been wrought for such as they.*





## **PART V: LET THEM LIVE!**



## PART V: LET THEM LIVE!

### BANG GOES THE ROLL-TOP DESK!

TROUBLES never leave singly.

Thiron came to Boston on the Monday before the opening concert, and I had to work at the station right up to the Saturday before his arrival, on account of the difficulty the railroad had in finding anybody else who was as hard up for a job as I was. When he asked me if I had spent the summer at the seashore, I told him I was detained in town by transportation matters.

We worked hard on the programme. I practiced every morning and rehearsed with him afternoons.

THE news spread fast in Cliftondale, and Monday evening, as father and Miss Stoddard were playing seven-up, Mrs. Tomlinson came in to congratulate me. She said she knew I had it in me.

"I wish I could stop in Heaven long enough to hear you say 'I told you so' to God," Miss Stoddard said.

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The old lady got real huffy and said that her good intentions did n't call for blasphemy.

"Play some shaky music, Sam," said Miss Stoddard.

"Your deal," said father.

THE sounding-post came down in one of Thiron's violins on Tuesday afternoon, so, after we finished rehearsing, I walked with him to a funny shop where he talked a half an hour with a white-haired old German named "Herr Kugel." All the shops in the alley were antique and I did n't see a person under sixty. There were queer, tumble-down wooden buildings and board signs of print-shops and theatrical goods and bookstores. Before we left, three old men came in with two violins and a 'cello. It seems they have a string quartette. Thiron shook hands with all of them and said he would like to remain if it were not for a previous engagement.

"I am very fond of chamber music," he said.

The quartette was tuning up as we left. How a violin must suffer being tuned!

"It puzzles me that there are so few string quartettes in America," Thiron said as we walked.

## L E T   T H E M   L I V E!

"Surely there is no more delightful form of instrumental music, and it is comparatively inexpensive. Incredible as it seems, I have known hotel dining-rooms where snare drummers and cornetists were engaged and the drummers were permitted to bang all sorts of queer hardware while dinner was being served. Even the cannibals use the softer tympani.

"It has been said that your American 'Jazz,' as you term it, is evolved from the music of the savages, but this is unjust. The savage has a quite perceptible sense of balance. His flutes and pipes and tom-toms and crude xylophones blend quite well, and one does not obliterate the other. The primitive rhythms are entirely free from syn-copation. The rag-time does not come from the Orient, for the rhythm of the Eastern music is soothing. I have never arrived at a satisfactory explanation of the folk-songs of the American music halls. The words are so idiomatic that I am not able to follow them."

SUNDAY noon, I started to get into my tuxedo and I had to leave my necktie untied until I called for Ethel. She certainly did look beautiful. For once, she did not have square clothes, but a sort of silver

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gray, with lace over it and gray suède slippers. Then she had a squirrel fur piece around her neck and a small hat with a little fur on it.

"I mortgaged the old place for this demi-mondaine scenery, in honor of your début," Ethel said, as she tied my white tie.

Before the concert, Thiron was nervous and excited.

"I cannot forget the terrible experience I had before in Boston. I have placed the same Sonata on the programme to-day," he said. He paced up and down, and then one of his violin strings broke, worst of all, the "A." That upset him still more. Strange to say, I was as cool as could be and diverted his mind by discussing the League of Nations.

The bell rang and we walked across the stage. What a reception he received! Every seat in the house was occupied and the force of the audience struck my face like a gust of air from a ventilator. The last thing Thiron said before we came out was that he would repeat the second period of the trio.

After the applause died down, I stood up a moment to make sure the post was solid under the piano lid. It is a habit I cannot break. As I

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touched it, I heard a little stifled scream in the balcony, almost over the stage on the right.

The strangest sensation came over me. I knew from that moment that Lena, my Lena, was in the hall and I should find her. Stranger still, I felt content to play to the end of the programme, for I knew she would wait for me. I seemed to be floating above myself, looking down, calm as night, happier than senses would grasp.

Sonata for Violin and Piano, Opus 24, Beethoven.

The first movement sang a deeper thing than spring. It seemed to be the idea that spring is circling around the universe, that it is always coming, that we may be always sure of it. The buds and flowers do not worry. They know the secret. They know their seed will come to life again for endless springs. The water under the earth rippled joyously because it has proof again that winter's ice will melt in time. The sunshine was glad for them all.

The adagio is the quiet of a warm spring sky at night, ending with a shimmer of moonlight across a silent river.

Then the scherzo. The notes of violin and piano

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chased each other like two squirrels up and down a birch, delighting the eyes of a crippled child, the last just whisking his tail out of sight before the trio. We played through the trio once, and I was all attention. I felt something about to happen. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Thiron's bow drop to his side. *He had forgotten the repeat again.* The same identical mistake of two years before. Just what he told me he would *not* do.

I snatched up my introduction to the scherzo again, without a break, phrasing it boldly and comically, and Thiron smiled. He knew. He was not flustered a bit.

Unseen black eyes called to me from the balcony. I *knew* my Lena was there. I knew she would wait for me.

Behind the stage, after the first number, Thiron was so grateful he almost kissed me.

"You have saved the day," he said. "My evil spirit has been banished from Boston." From then on, he was in a rare mood.

TOWARD the end, I began to get excited and impatient. I thought the audience would never let



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him go. After his last programme number, he made me stand and bow.

I wish I could bow like Thiron; I go at it more like Will Rogers.

At last I was free and rushed to the corridor. I saw a blue silk dress coming to meet me, then a white slim throat and coils and coils of blue-black hair. Lena!

She saw me and stopped, dead-white and still, and then cried, "Samuel!" We forgot there were other people in the world. My arms were around her. I kissed her hair, as she held tight and sobbed.

Just then Ethel came out. It seemed to me she paled a little, but she gave me the wink and said,

"I'll toddle right along, Sam. I've an engagement in town." She turned.

"Who was that?" Lena wrenched herself away like a flash.

"Just a neighbor," I said. Then she melted again and her eyes let out all the love within.

"You don't love any one else, Sam?"

"I have never loved any one but you." (Which was the truth, for once.)

Then she grew frightened suddenly. "But it

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can't be you, Samuel! I saw you only Saturday in a cap. I did. Samuel, it can't be you!"

"Don't you worry about that, sweetheart. If it was any one else, I would n't stand here and watch them make love to you."

THEN I saw Mary and I almost kissed her too. She made an excuse to go away, and Lena and I walked toward the Public Garden. For a while, we scarcely said a word. Then she told me the whole story, how she had gone to live with the Levines and had written me to forget her. I never received the letter.

Lena grew very grave and sad.

"It is not right for me to love you, Samuel. The laws —"

"Sweetheart, what is the sense in saying a thing is wrong or right if we cannot live without it? People change faster than the laws. If we do what our hearts tell us, the churches will catch up in a hundred years or so. If they don't, we are so much better off."

Then I did some quick thinking. I had to leave for New York on Thursday. The license took five days, but I knew Fred Eldridge could fix that somehow.

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What a nuisance laws are!

"We must be married to-morrow, Lena, and you shall make the trip with me."

A wave of scarlet crept up from under the blue silk dress, over the lovely throat and face and into the jet-black hair. She hesitated and made excuses and said she must think it over, but I told her there would be plenty of time for that afterwards and if she did n't like it, we could easily get a divorce.

"Samuel," she said fiercely, "don't talk like that!"

WE sat on a bench in the Garden and did n't even think after that was settled. At last I broke the silence.

"I'm so happy."

"I'm — I'm starved," said Lena.

AFTER we had chop suey and fried chicken and ice-cream at a Chinese restaurant, we started for Joy Street.

I wonder who a Chink can marry without getting in wrong with the Joss. Neither of them appears to care much.

## INDELIBLE

MARY met us at the door wild with excitement. She had a telegram from Pietro to meet him in New York right away. She must start the next morning.

"You must wait for our wedding at eleven o'clock," I said, and Mary and Lena clasped each other and began to cry.

I was almost afraid to leave them for fear of losing them again, but after a while I started for Cliftondale. At that time of night I had to walk half the way. At two o'clock I woke father, all excited, and said:

"Wake up, father. I'm going to be married to-morrow."

He sat up and blinked and said, "What the hell's wrong?"

"I'm going to be married to-morrow. I found Lena."

"You better wait till the day after so you can get good and sober. You have no head for liquor, son."

I soon convinced him I was sober, and I sat on his bed in my undertaker's clothes and told him what we were going to do, and that we would come back next summer to live on the old place. After

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I went to bed, I could hear him turning and twisting and neither of us slept a wink.

WE were married without disaster by a justice of the peace. I did n't dare to take a chance on any minister or rabbi. They had made enough trouble already. Marriage is nothing to be afraid of. The trouble comes before and after.

At noon, Mary left for New York, trying to be happy, but I could see she was worried. She told Lena she was going to tell Pietro the whole story.

ETHEL wrote me a long letter, saying she was glad I was happy and that there were no hard feelings.

"If I were you," she wrote, "I should not tell your wife too much about me, because I want to be a bosom friend to her, and I could see from a casual glance at her eyes, that if she was ever included in an eternal triangle, the other two would both be dead. While I meant what I said about loving you, and have n't seen any reason to change my mind, I am not quite ready to face my Maker. There may be some other desirable young man who cannot find his regular girl within the time limit."

## THANKSGIVING

HAPPINESS is hard to get accustomed to. Riding in the trains, often I would reach over and touch Lena's arm lightly to be sure she was there beside me. She loves to see the new places and to watch the fields and towns and hills go by the car windows.

I had never ridden in Pullmans and neither had she, but we watched the others and did n't attract much attention. You ought to see the porters run around for Lena. Everybody loves her. Father, on our wedding morning, got out his old black suit and his old Sunday shirt with the brown marks on it from the iron. During the performance, I noticed that the flaps on his little black necktie were out on one side. I knew he was sad, but he did n't let on, and when he saw Lena in her blue silk dress (she had had sleeves put in it) and her cream-white skin and glorious black hair, he put his hands on her shoulders and said:

"You are not a handsome couple, exactly, but Sam certainly does set you off, Lena."

Jacques Thiron is as happy about the whole busi-

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ness as I am myself. He says that love and music meet somewhere, way beyond the stars. We three often dine together on the road and he says it is the best tour he ever made. He is composing a quartette in G minor, dedicated to Lena.

THANKSGIVING afternoon, we played at Cincinnati, although they do not celebrate it there. After the recital, Lena went to our room to take a little rest, and I looked over the town. There was a large news-stand in one of the squares and I spied a Boston newspaper. I wish I had not seen it. As I looked it over, a little headline caught my eye.

## JOY STREET SUICIDE

Mary Carbone, of Joy Street, killed herself by taking poison last night. The suicide followed a quarrel with her lover, name unknown, according to the story of the landlady, Mrs. K. H. Simmons. Mrs. Simmons states that Miss Carbone, some weeks before, had met her fiancé returned from overseas in New York, but had returned to Boston at once, looking ill, and had been despondent ever since. The nature of the quarrel is not known.

MARY. Our dear, faithful Mary. I walked an hour

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and could not shut out her face as I saw it when she boarded that New York train. I knew then she was going to tell that miserable barber all about herself. I would have strangled him if I could have found him.

Thanksgiving gives me a pain in the neck.

As soon as I reached the hotel, Lena said, "What's the matter, Sam?" I lied about eating something or other. She made me lie down. In a few minutes, she said, thoughtfully,

"I wonder why I do not hear from Mary. Where is she and what is she doing? I hope she is happy."

"She is happy," I said, turning my face. "She could n't tell where to find us while we are traveling."

MARY. Our dear, faithful Mary. Catholic laws will not leave her in peace even after death.

God! How I hate laws.



## SAD EYES

WHEN we returned to Clifftondale, at the close of the season, we found a stack of wedding presents waiting for us. In the first place, Miss Stoddard had given us her library. There was a new hardwood floor in the old parlor, new panel wall-paper, and rows and rows of bookshelves. Ethel had superintended the decorations. Lena spent the first hour looking at the books and laughing and crying. She loves books. My grand piano was near one corner, and beside it, a bronze bust of Beethoven which Mr. Flynn had sent.

The room had a feeling of comfort and rest.

Signor Grazzoni sent a large half-tone of "The Thinker," by Rodin. "The Thinker" looks like an ice-man I knew who worked his way through college. I've seen him sit up on the seat just like that, with a street full of women yelling that he did n't see their cards. Of course, he had clothes on.

One or two of the presents were sad. Mrs. Brooks gave Lena a half-dozen spoons, and the day we arrived she called a minute, to give me a watch she had bought for Peter to wear at high school.

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Peter died of the "flu" in Ireland, where the English sent him to suppress some traitors who wanted Ireland to be a Republic like the United States.

A thing that made Lena very happy was a swell fur sealskin coat sent her by a young Jew named Joseph Levine. Joseph was the son of the people Lena lived with after her accident, and he wanted to marry her.

To tell the truth, it seemed nervy to me at first that a Jew should think of marrying my Lena, but I thought it over and, of course, it was the natural thing to do.

If you start out wrong, it is hard to remember that everybody is as good as you are.

Lena was touched by the act, because she was supposed to have been cast out of the tribe. That stuff does n't seem to go with the young people in any of the religions.

MISS STODDARD and Lena spend half their time in the yard. Lena can't get used to having so much room outdoors, and thinks Clifftondale is a beautiful place in which to live. She is planting all kinds of flowers and bushes and makes me mow the lawn regularly. Miss Stoddard helps with the gardening

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and she can make two violets grow where Burbank would get one chickweed. The old barn is all tacked over with strings for sweet peas to climb on.

We received a trunk full of silver and dishes of all kinds except plates, cups, and saucers. Half of the funny forks and spoons we did not know how to use, and a jeweler's catalogue only made it worse. There is an olive fork that you could catch an olive with if you had it in a thimble. Then there is a left-handed fish server, but all the fish from the Atlantic must be right-handed.

Bill Milliken spent half the winter making a black walnut music cabinet. One thing Lena insists on is having a flag on the front piazza roof every pleasant day.

Imagine flying a flag in peace times.

ONE afternoon I was pushing the lawnmower, when I heard a sound like a billy-goat —

“R-a-e-e-e-e-cks — debot!”

Down the road came a ragman with a rickety wagon and a bony old horse, whose ears flopped in jerky rhythm as he walked. Lena ran down the front stairs and stopped the ragman and they began to talk in Jewish. The ragman perched on the

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high seat and took it easy, but Lena shot out sparks with the queer-sounding words. Pretty soon she came to me, threw her arms around my neck and kissed me so hard her glorious hair rippled down her back.

“Samuel, I want that horse to remain with us. He could live in the barn and I will take care of him.”

Dr. McKenzie had told me that she might be a trifle moody in her condition, but I did n’t expect to be coaxed into the glue business.

“You and father have been hitting up that elderberry wine again,” I said.

Father chuckles every time Lena drinks a glass of wine with him. He can’t get over it.

“No, Samuel, he once belonged to my father.”

That was different, of course, and I gave the Jew fifty dollars. The next morning he brought back the horse. Lena tends him as if he were an old man. One night, not long ago, she told me about how the horse kept her out of the Revere House just after her hand was hurt. Then I told her about my terrible thoughts and how I was arrested there. Memories of that kind make us cling very close together.

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I have become much attached to the horse myself. We never tie him, and he roams all around the barn. Father sawed off the top half of the door, so the old rascal can stick out his head and look around. Father has a way with horses, and sometimes Lena plagues him by making-believe she is jealous.

Often, when the wise old horse's head sticks out the door and his ears stand up almost erect, Lena, watching from the window, murmurs something like "*Olov hasholom*."

"*Olvo hasholom*" means "Peace to his soul," so she cannot refer to Sad Eyes.

## ' MONSIEUR MILLIKEN

JUST before our season commenced, Jacques Thiron visited our home and we had a most pleasant evening.

He told us about conditions in France and said he would make a European tour as soon as Europe recovered a little. Lena's eyes sparkled at that.

Of course, we could not keep away from music, and while we were playing, who should come in but Bill Milliken. Thiron was delighted to meet him and treated him like the Prince of Wales. He asked "Monsieur Milliken" what he would like best to hear.

Bill is a hot-looking Monsieur.

"Beautiful Sunset," said Bill.

Thiron looked puzzled, but I played it through and he caught on immediately. You never heard such variations of that old song. Bill's eyes stuck right out of his head. At last, Lena stood up and sang the words in her soft contralto, while Thiron played an obbligato on the G string. Bill could not help crying just a little.

"I never have amounted to much," he said,

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“but music like that makes me feel as if everything would be all right sometime.”

Thiron became very grave.

“Monsieur Milliken,” he said precisely, “you say you have not accomplished great things. You do yourself injustice. I have heard the story of how you kindled this young man’s desire for music. It was you who struck the spark. It was you who fostered genius where others did not discover it. I am grateful to you. The world is grateful.”

And he bowed as only Thiron can.

## THE VIOLIN

THE baby was born the third of December. Fortunately I was in the East and able to be at home for the event, although I seemed to be more or less superfluous.

Lena, a perfect little girl with soft white skin and black eyes. It was remarkable, the hair that child had when she was born. She will be the greatest in the world, if temperament counts.

By Christmas Day, Lena was around the house. How happy she looked with little Lena. In the afternoon the doorbell rang, and who should be there but Thiron and the quartette of old-timers from the violin shop. One of them, Adolph Kugel, kept a large bundle hidden from Lena.

They played to their hearts' content, Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, Beethoven — happy Christmas music, and Lena fed them cakes and wine between times. At last, they played Thiron's quartette in G minor from the manuscript, the one he dedicated to Lena.

Then Herr Kugel, shaking with happy excitement, took big Lena on his knee and said:



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“Liebchen, I have a surprise for you. Always I have felt there would be a little Lena, so when Herr Reinhardt brought me your violin, I repaired it and put it away for the little girl, if there was one. Only the neck and the bridge were broken, and that was nothing.”

Lena paled and her fingers fumbled as she tore off the paper from the bundle. There was a leather case, and inside, a lady violin with a new, smooth, thoroughbred neck. It had grace and symmetry and soul. The perfect back shone with fine-grained beauty.

Where has man traced such patterns as are found inside of trees?

## LET THEM LIVE!

*God looks o'er the world, a stupid, cluttered map with many billion eyes for dots, upstaring helter-skelter. The eyes are always bright to start with. Every morning the new ones are bright. Stillbirths don't count.*

*God has a roll-top desk, and in the pigeonholes, erasers.*

*First he tries a brown one, Heritage. He rubs the helter-skelter map and weaker dots fade out.*

*Brush away the debris.*

*A soiled eraser, Poverty, sweeps the sheet. Some are called and many weaken.*

*Flick the dirt away.*

*Down comes Crime, the red one, and eyes are smudged that were not aimed at. Eruption, Famine, Disease; Storm, Pestilence, Drought. He tries them all at times.*

*Divine Impatience! A steel eraser, War, which gashes the map and wipes great dead-white furrows.*

*A rotten job to clean this time.*

# LET THEM LIVE!

*Believe it or not, there are still bright eyes remaining.*

*Bang goes the lid of the roll-top desk.*

*Let them live!*

THE END















